# PAROCHIAL AND PLAIN SERMONS

VOLUME VI.

RIVINGTONS

London ... ... ... ... ... ... *Waterloo Place*
Oxford ... ... ... ... ... ... *High Street*
Cambridge ... ... ... ... ... *Trinity Street*

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018

# PAROCHIAL AND PLAIN SERMONS

By JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, B.D.
FORMERLY VICAR OF ST. MARY'S, OXFORD

IN EIGHT VOLUMES
VOL. VI.

*NEW EDITION*

RIVINGTONS
London, Oxford, and Cambridge
1868

00110723

# CONTENTS.


SERMON I.

FASTING A SOURCE OF TRIAL.

(*Lent.*)

Matthew iv. 2.

PAGE

"*And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered*" . . . . . 1

SERMON II.

LIFE THE SEASON OF REPENTANCE.

(*Lent.*)

Genesis xxvii. 34.

"*And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father*" . . . . . 15

SERMON III.

APOSTOLIC ABSTINENCE A PATTERN FOR CHRISTIANS.

(*Lent.*)

1 Timothy v. 23.

"*Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities*" . . . . . 26

SERMON IV.

CHRIST'S PRIVATIONS A MEDITATION FOR CHRISTIANS.

(*Lent.*)

2 Cor. viii. 9.

PAGE

"*Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich*" . . . . . 39

SERMON V.

CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD MADE MAN.

(*Lent.*)

Hebrews ix. 11.

"*Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building*" . . . . . 53

SERMON VI.

THE INCARNATE SON, A SUFFERER AND SACRIFICE.

(*Lent.*)

Phil. ii. 8.

"*Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross*" . . 69

SERMON VII.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST THE MEASURE OF THE WORLD.

(*Lent.*)

John xii. 32.

"*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me*" . . . . . 83

SERMON VIII.

DIFFICULTY OF REALIZING SACRED PRIVILEGES.

(*Easter.*)

Psalm cxviii. 24.

PAGE

"*This is the Day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it*". . . . . 94

SERMON IX.

THE GOSPEL SIGN ADDRESSED TO FAITH.

(*Easter.*)

Matthew xii. 38.

"*Then certain of the Scribes and of the Pharises answered, saying, Master, we would see a Sign from Thee*" . . . . . 105

SERMON X.

THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH.

(*Easter.*)

John xvi. 16.

"*A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father*" . . . 120

SERMON XI.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRESENCE.

(*Easter.*)

John vi. 50.

"*This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die*" . . . . . 136

SERMON XII.

FAITH THE TITLE FOR JUSTIFICATION.

(*Easter.*)

Matthew viii. 11.

PAGE

"*Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven*" . 153

SERMON XIII.

JUDAISM OF THE PRESENT DAY.

(*Easter.*)

Hebrews xi. 13.

"*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth*" . . . . . 174

SERMON XIV.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE APOSTLES.

(*Easter.*)

Mark ix. 38, 39.

"*And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and he followeth not us; and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me*" . . . . . 190

SERMON XV.

RISING WITH CHRIST.

(*Ascension.*)

Col. iii. 1—3.

PAGE

"*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God*" . . . . 208

SERMON XVI.

WARFARE THE CONDITOIN OF VICTORY.

(*Ascension.*)

Luke xxiv. 52, 53.

"*And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God. Amen*" . . . . . 2

SERMON XVII.

WAITING FOR CHRIST.

(*Ascension.*)

Rev. xxii. 20.

"*He who testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come qui Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus*" . . . .

SERMON XVIII.

SUBJECTION OF THE REASON AND FEELINGS TO TH WORD.

(*Ascension.*)

2 Cor. x. 5.

"*Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedien*

## SERMON XIX.

THE GOSPEL PALACES.

(*Whitsuntide.*)

Psalm lxxviii. 69.

PAGE

"*He built His sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which He hath established for ever*" . . . . . 270

## SERMON XX.

THE VISIBLE TEMPLE.

(*Whitsuntide.*)

Matthew xxiii. 17.

*Whether is greater, the gold, or the Temple that sanctifieth the gold?*" . . . . . 280

## SERMON XXI.

OFFERINGS FOR THE SANCTUARY.

(*Whitsuntide.*)

Esaiah lx. 13.

*y of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-l the box together, to beautify the place of My Sanctuary, l make the place of My feet glorious*" . . . . 295

## SERMON XXII.

THE WEAPONS OF SAINTS.

(*Whitsuntide.*)

Matthew xix. 30.

*rst shall be last, and the last shall be first*" . 313

## SERMON XXIII.

FAITH WITHOUT DEMONSTRATION.

(*Trinity.*)

John iv. 48.

PAGE.

"*Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe*" . . . 327

## SERMON XXIV.

THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

(*Trinity.*)

Matthew xxviii. 19.

"*Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*" . 343

## SERMON XXV.

PEACE IN BELIEVING.

(*Trinity.*)

Esaiah vi. 3.

"*And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts*" . . . . . 362

# SERMON I.

## FASTING A SOURCE OF TRIAL.

(FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.)

MATT. iv. 2.

*"And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights. He was afterward an hungered."*

THE season of humiliation, which precedes Easter, lasts for forty days, in memory of our Lord's long fast in the wilderness. Accordingly on this day, the first Sunday in Lent, we read the Gospel which gives an account of it; and in the Collect we pray Him, who for our sakes fasted forty days and forty nights, to bless our abstinence to the good of our souls and bodies.

We fast by way of penitence, and in order to subdue the flesh. Our Saviour had no need of fasting for either purpose. His fasting was unlike ours, as in its intensity, so in its object. And yet when we begin to fast, His pattern is set before us; and we continue the time of fasting till, in number of days, we have equalled His.

There is a reason for this;—in truth, we must do nothing except with Him in our eye. As He it is, through whom alone we have the power to do any good

thing; so unless we do it for Him it is not good. From Him our obedience comes, towards Him it must look. He says, "Without Me ye can do nothing[1]." No work is good without grace and without love.

St. Paul gave up all things "to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is from God upon faith[2]." Then only are our righteousnesses acceptable when they are done, not in a legal way, but in Christ through faith. Vain were all the deeds of the Law, because they were not attended by the power of the Spirit. They were the mere attempts of unaided nature to fulfil what it ought indeed, but was not able to fulfil. None but the blind and carnal, or those who were in utter ignorance, could find aught in them to rejoice in. What were all the righteousnesses of the Law, what its deeds, even when more than ordinary, its alms and fastings, its disfiguring of faces and afflicting of souls; what was all this but dust and dross, a pitiful earthly service, a miserable hopeless penance, so far as the grace and the presence of Christ were absent? The Jews might humble themselves, but they did not rise in the spirit, while they fell down in the flesh; they might afflict themselves, but it did not turn to their salvation; they might sorrow, but not as always rejoicing; the outward man might perish, but the inward man was not renewed day by day. They had the burden and heat of the day, and the yoke of the Law, but it did not "work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

[1] John xv. 5.

[2] Phil. iii. 9.

But God hath reserved some better thing for us. is what it is to be one of Christ's little ones,—to l to do what the Jews thought they could do, and not; to have that within us through which we all things; to be possessed by His presence as o our strength, our merit, our hope, our crown; to in a wonderful way His members, the instrum visible form, or sacramental sign, of the One I Ever-Present Son of God, mystically reiterating of us all the acts of His earthly life, His birth cration, fasting, temptation, conflicts, victories, ings, agony, passion, death, resurrection, and asc —He being all in all,—we, with as little power selves, as little excellence or merit, as the w Baptism, or the bread and wine in Holy Comm yet strong in the Lord and in the power of His These are the thoughts with which we celebrated mas and Epiphany, these are the thoughts whic accompany us through Lent.

Yes, even in our penitential exercises, when w least have hoped to find a pattern in Him, Ch gone before us to sanctify them to us. He has fasting as a means of grace, in that He has fast fasting is only acceptable when it is done for H Penitence is mere formality, or mere remorse done in love. If we fast, without uniting ours heart to Christ, imitating Him, and praying would make our fasting His own, would ass with His own, and communicate to it the virtu own, so that we may be in Him, and He in us; as Jews, not as Christians. Well then, in

of this first Sunday, do we place the thought of
before us, whose grace must be within us, lest in
nastisements we beat the air and humble ourselves
n.

v in many ways the example of Christ may be
a comfort and encouragement to us at this season
year.

, first of all, it will be well to insist on the cir-
nce, that our Lord did thus retire from the
ns confirming to us the like duty, as far as we
serve it. This He did specially in the instance
us, before His entering upon His own ministry;
is not the only instance recorded. Before He
His Apostles, He observed the same preparation.
me to pass in those days that He went out into
ntain to pray, and continued all night in prayer
[1]." Prayer through the night was a self-chastise-
f the same kind as fasting. On another occasion,
ending away the multitudes, "He went up into a
in apart to pray [2];" and on this occasion also, He
to have remained there through great part of
ht. Again, amid the excitement caused by His
s, "In the morning, rising up a great while before
e went out and departed into a solitary place, and
ayed [3]." Considering that our Lord is the pattern
an nature in its perfection, surely we cannot doubt
ch instances of strict devotion are intended for
tation, if we would be perfect. But the duty is
beyond doubt by finding similar instances in the

[1] Luke vi. 12. [2] Matt. xiv. 23. [3] Mark i. 35.

case of the most eminent of His servants. St. Paul, in the Epistle for this day, mentions among other sufferings, that he and his brethren were "in watchings, in fastings," and in a later chapter, that he was "in fastings often." St. Peter retired to Joppa, to the house of one Simon, a tanner, on the sea-shore, and there fasted and prayed. Moses and Elijah both were supported through miraculous fasts, of the same length as our Lord's. Moses, indeed, at two separate times; as he tells us himself, "Thus I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I did neither eat bread nor drink water[1]." Elijah, having been fed by an Angel, "went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights[2]." Daniel, again, "set his face unto the Lord his God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." Again, at another time, he says, "In those days, I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled[3]." These are instances of fastings after the similitude of Christ.

Next I observe, that our Saviour's fast was but introductory to His temptation. He went into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, but before He was tempted He fasted. Nor, as is worth notice, was this a mere preparation for the conflict, but it was the cause of the conflict in good measure. Instead of its simply arming Him against temptation, it is plain, that in the first instance, His retirement and abstinence exposed Him to it.

[1] Deut. ix. 18. [2] 1 Kings xix. 8. [3] Dan. ix. 3; x. 2, 3.

Fasting was the primary occasion of it. "When He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards an hungered;" and then the tempter came, bidding Him turn the stones into bread. Satan made use of His fast against Himself.

And this is singularly the case with Christians now, who endeavour to imitate Him; and it is well they should know it, for else they will be discouraged when they practise abstinences. It is commonly said, that fasting is intended to make us better Christians, to sober us, and to bring us more entirely at Christ's feet in faith and humility. This is true, viewing matters on the whole. On the whole, and at last, this effect will be produced, but it is not at all certain that it will follow at once. On the contrary, such mortifications have at the time very various effects on different persons, and are to be observed, not from their visible benefits, but from faith in the Word of God. Some men, indeed, are subdued by fasting and brought at once nearer to God; but others find it, however slight, scarcely more than an occasion of temptation. For instance, it is sometimes even made an objection to fasting, as if it were a reason for not practising it, that it makes a man irritable and ill-tempered. I confess it often may do this. Again, what very often follows from it is, a feebleness which deprives him of his command over his bodily acts, feelings, and expressions. Thus it makes him seem, for instance, to be out of temper when he is not; I mean, because his tongue, his lips, nay his brain, are not in his power. He does not use the words he wishes to use, nor the accent and tone. He seems sharp

when he is not; and the consciousness of this, and the reaction of that consciousness upon his mind, is a temptation, and actually makes him irritable, particularly if people misunderstand him, and think him what he is not. Again, weakness of body may deprive him of self-command in other ways; perhaps, he cannot help smiling or laughing, when he ought to be serious, which is evidently a most distressing and humbling trial; or when wrong thoughts present themselves, his mind cannot throw them off, any more than if it were some dead thing, and not spirit; but they then make an impression on him which he is not able to resist. Or again, weakness of body often hinders him from fixing his mind on his prayers, instead of making him pray more fervently; or again, weakness of body is often attended with languor and listlessness, and strongly tempts a man to sloth. Yet, I have not mentioned the most distressing of the effects which may follow from even the moderate exercise of this great Christian duty. It is undeniably a means of temptation, and I say so, lest persons should be surprised, and despond when they find it so. And the merciful Lord knows that so it is from experience; and that He has experienced and thus knows it, as Scripture records, is to us a thought full of comfort. I do not mean to say, God forbid, that aught of sinful infirmity sullied His immaculate soul; but it is plain from the sacred history, that in His case, as in ours, fasting opened the way to temptation. And, perhaps, this is the truest view of such exercises, that in some wonderful unknown way they open the next world for good and evil upon us, and are an introduction

to somewhat of an extraordinary conflict with the powers of evil. Stories are afloat (whether themselves true or not matters not, they show what the voice of mankind thinks *likely* to be true), of hermits in deserts being assaulted by Satan in strange ways, yet resisting the evil one, and chasing him away, after our Lord's pattern, and in His strength; and, I suppose, if we knew the secret history of men's minds in any age, we should find *this* (at least, I think I am not theorizing),—viz. a remarkable union in the case of those who by God's grace have made advances in holy things (whatever be the case where men have not), a union on the one hand of temptations offered to the mind, and on the other, of the mind's not being affected by them, not consenting to them, even in momentary acts of the will, but simply hating them, and receiving no harm from them. At least, I can conceive this—and so far persons are evidently brought into fellowship and conformity with Christ's temptation, who was tempted, yet without sin.

Let it not then distress Christians, even if they find themselves exposed to thoughts from which they turn with abhorrence and terror. Rather let such a trial bring before their thoughts, with something of vividness and distinctness, the condescension of the Son of God. For if it be a trial to us creatures and sinners to have thoughts alien from our hearts presented to us, what must have been the suffering to the Eternal Word, God of God, and Light of Light, Holy and True, to have been so subjected to Satan, that he could inflict every misery on Him short of sinning? Certainly it is a trial to us to have motives and feelings imputed to us

before men, by the accuser of the brethren, which we never entertained; it is a trial to have ideas secretly suggested within, from which we shrink; it is a trial to us for Satan to be allowed so to mix his own thoughts with ours, that we feel guilty even when we are not; nay, to be able to set on fire our irrational nature, till in some sense we really sin against our will: but has not One gone before us more awful in His trial, more glorious in His victory? He was tempted in all points "like as we are, yet without sin." Surely here too, Christ's temptation speaks comfort and encouragement to us.

This then is, perhaps, a truer view of the consequences of fasting, than is commonly taken. Of course, it *is* always, under God's grace, a spiritual benefit to our hearts eventually, and improves them,—through Him who worketh all in all; and it often is a sensible benefit to us at the time. Still it is often otherwise; often it but increases the excitability and susceptibility of our hearts; in all cases it is therefore to be viewed, chiefly as an *approach to God*—an approach to the powers of heaven—yes, and to the powers of hell. And in this point of view there is something very awful in it. For what we know, Christ's temptation is but the fulness of that which, in its degree, and according to our infirmities and corruptions, takes place in all His servants who seek Him. And if so, this surely was a strong reason for the Church's associating our season of humiliation with Christ's sojourn in the wilderness, that we might not be left to our own thoughts, and, as it were, "with the wild beasts," and thereupon despond when we afflict

ourselves; but might feel that we are what we really are, not bondmen of Satan, and children of wrath, hopelessly groaning under our burden, confessing it, and crying out, "O wretched man!" but sinners indeed, and sinners afflicting themselves, and doing penance for sin; but withal God's children, in whom repentance is fruitful; and who, while they abase themselves are exalted, and at the very time that they are throwing themselves at the foot of the Cross, are still Christ's soldiers, sword in hand, fighting a generous warfare, and knowing that they have that in them, and upon them, which devils tremble at, and flee.

And this is another point which calls for distinct notice in the history of our Saviour's fasting and temptation, viz. the *victory* which attended it. He had three temptations, and thrice He conquered,—at the last He said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan;" on which "the devil leaveth Him." This conflict and victory in the world unseen, is intimated in other passages of Scripture. The most remarkable of these is what our Lord says with reference to the demoniac, whom His Apostles could not cure. He had just descended from the Mount of Transfiguration, where, let it be observed, He seems to have gone up with His favoured Apostles to pass the night in prayer. He came down after that communion with the unseen world, and cast out the unclean spirit, and then He said, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting[1]," which is nothing less than a plain declaration that such exercises give the soul

[1] Mark ix. 29.

power over the unseen world; nor can any sufficient reason be assigned for confining it to the first ages of the Gospel. And I think there is enough evidence, even in what may be known afterwards of the effects of such exercises upon persons now (not to have recourse to history), to show that these exercises are God's instruments for giving the Christian a high and royal power above and over his fellows.

And since prayer is not only the weapon, ever necessary and sure, in our conflict with the powers of evil, but a deliverance from evil is ever implied as the object of prayer, it follows that all texts whatever which speak of our addressing and prevailing on Almighty God, with prayer and fasting, do, in fact, declare this conflict and promise this victory over the evil one. Thus in the parable, the importunate widow, who represents the Church in prayer, is not only earnest *with* God, but *against* her adversary. "Avenge me of mine adversary," she says; and our "adversary" is "the devil, who, like a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist," adds St. Peter, "stedfast in the faith." Let it be observed that, in this parable, *perseverance* in prayer is especially recommended to us. And this is part of the lesson taught us by the long continuance of the Lent fast,—that we are not to gain our wishes by one day set apart for humiliation, or by one prayer, however fervent, but by "continuing instant in prayer." This too is signified to us in the account of Jacob's conflict. He, like our Saviour, was occupied in it *through* the night. Who it was whom he was permitted to meet in that solitary season, we are

not told; but He with whom he wrestled, gave him strength to wrestle, and at last left a token on him, as if to show that he had prevailed only by the condescension of Him over whom he prevailed. So strengthened, he persevered till the morning broke, and asked a blessing; and He whom he asked did bless him, giving him a new name, in memory of his success. "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed[1]." In like manner, Moses passed one of his forty days' fast in confession and intercession for the people, who had raised the golden calf. "Thus I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the Lord had said He would destroy you. I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not Thy people and Thine inheritance, which Thou hast redeemed through Thy greatness, which Thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand[2]." Again, both of Daniel's recorded fasts ended in a blessing. His first was intercessory for his people, and the prophecy of the seventy weeks was given him. The second was also rewarded with prophetical disclosures; and what is remarkable, it seems to have had an influence (if I may use such a word) upon the unseen world, from the time he began it.—"The Angel said, Fear not, Daniel, for *from the first day* that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and *I am come* for thy words[3]." He came at the end, but he

[1] Gen. xxxii. 28. [2] Deut. ix. 25, 26. [3] Dan. x. 12.

prepared to go at the beginning. But more than this, the Angel proceeds, "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days;" just the time during which Daniel had been praying—"but lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Persia."

An Angel came to Daniel upon his fast; so too in our Lord's instance, Angels came and ministered unto Him; and so we too may well believe, and take comfort in the thought, that even now, Angels are especially sent to those who thus seek God. Not Daniel only, but Elijah too was, during his fast, strengthened by an Angel; an Angel appeared to Cornelius, while he was fasting, and in prayer; and I do really think, that there is enough in what religious persons may see around them, to serve to confirm this hope thus gathered from the word of God.

"He shall give His Angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways[1];" and the devil knows of this promise, for he used it in that very hour of temptation. He knows full well what our power is, and what is his own weakness. So we have nothing to fear while we remain within the shadow of the throne of the Almighty. "A thousand shall fall beside Thee, and ten thousand at Thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh Thee." While we are found in Christ, we are partakers of His security. He has broken the power of Satan; He has gone "upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon hath He trod under His feet;" and henceforth

[1] Ps. xci. 11.

evil spirits, instead of having power over us, tremble and are affrighted at every true Christian. They know he has that in him which makes him their master; that he may, if he will, laugh them to scorn, and put them to flight. They know this well, and bear it in mind, in all their assaults upon him; sin alone gives them power over him; and their great object is, to make him sin, and therefore to surprise him into sin, knowing they have no other way of overcoming him. They try to scare him by the appearance of danger, and *so* to surprise him; or they approach stealthily and covertly to seduce him, and *so* to surprise him. But except by taking him at unawares, they can do nothing. Therefore let us be, my brethren, "not ignorant of their devices;" and as knowing them, let us watch, fast, and pray, let us keep close under the wings of the Almighty, that He may be our shield and buckler. Let us pray Him to make known to us His will,—to teach us our faults,—to take from us whatever may offend Him,—and to lead us in the way everlasting. And during this sacred season, let us look upon ourselves as on the Mount with Him—within the veil—hid with Him—not out of Him, or apart from Him, in whose presence alone is life, but with and in Him—learning of His Law with Moses, of His attributes with Elijah, of His counsels with Daniel—learning to repent, learning to confess and to amend—learning His love and His fear—unlearning ourselves, and growing up unto Him who is our Head.

# SERMON II.

## LIFE THE SEASON OF REPENTANCE.

(SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.)

GEN. xxvii. 34.

*"And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father."*

I SUPPOSE no one can read this chapter without feeling some pity for Esau. He had expected that his father would give him his blessing, but his brother was beforehand with him and got the blessing instead. He did not know what had happened, and he came in to his father to be blessed, without any suspicion that he was not to be blessed. His father, full of amazement and distress, told him, that without knowing it, for he was blind and could not see, he had already given the blessing to his brother Jacob, and he could not recall it. On hearing this, Esau burst out into "a great and exceeding bitter cry," as the text expresses it. All his hopes were disappointed in a moment. He had built much upon this blessing. For Esau, when he was young, had committed a very great sin against God. He was his

father's first-born, and in those times, as now among the rich and noble, it was a great thing to be the eldest in a family. In Esau's case these privileges were the greater, for they were the direct gift of God. Esau, as being the eldest born of his father Isaac, inherited certain rights and privileges which Isaac, the long-expected heir of Abraham, had received from Abraham. Now Esau's sin, when he was a young man, had been this—he parted with his birthright to his younger brother, Jacob. He thought lightly of God's great gift. How little he thought of it is plain by the price he took for it. Esau had been hunting, and he came home tired and faint. Jacob, who had remained at home, had some pottage; and Esau begged for some of it. Jacob knew the worth of the birthright, though Esau did not; he had faith to discern it. So, when Esau asked for pottage, he said he would give it to Esau in exchange for his birthright; and Esau, caring nothing for the birthright, sold it to Jacob for the mess of food. This was a great sin, as being a contempt of a special gift of God, a gift, which, after his father Isaac, no one in the whole world had but he.

Time went on. Esau got older; and understood more than before the value of the gift which he had thus profanely surrendered. Doubtless he would fain have got it back again if he could; but that was impossible. Under these circumstances, as we find in the chapter which has been read in the course of to-day's Service, his father proposed to give him his solemn blessing before he died. Now this blessing in those times carried great weight with it, as being of the nature of a prophecy, and it

had been from the first divinely intended for Jacob; Esau had no right to it, but he thought that in this way he should in a certain sense get back his birthright, or what would stand in its place. He had parted with it easily, and he expected to regain it easily. Observe, he showed no repentance for what he had done, no self-reproach; he had no fear that God would punish him. He only regretted his loss, without humbling himself; and he determined to retrace his steps as quickly and quietly as he could. He went to hunt for venison, and dress it as savoury meat for his father, as his father bade him. And having got all ready, he came with it and stood before his father. Then was it that he learned, to his misery, that God's gifts are not thus lightly to be treated; he had sold, he could not recover. He had hoped to have had his father's blessing, but Jacob had received it instead. He had thought to regain God's favour, not by fasting and prayer, but by savoury meat, by feasting and making merry.

Such seems, on the whole, St. Paul's account of the matter, in his Epistle to the Hebrews. After having given examples of faith, he bids his Christian brethren beware lest there should be any one among them like Esau, whom he calls a "profane person;" as having thought and acted with so little of real perception of things unseen; "looking diligently," he says, "lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found

no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears[1]."

This then is the meaning of Esau's great and bitter cry, which at first sight we are disposed to pity. It is the cry of one who has rejected God, and God in turn has rejected him. It is the cry of one who has trifled with God's mercies, and then sought to regain them when it was all too late. It is the cry of one who has not heeded the warning, "See that ye receive not the grace of God in vain," and who has "come short of the grace of God[2]." It is the cry predicted by the wise man, "Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me[3]." That subtilty and keenness of his brother Jacob, by which he got before him, and took the kingdom of heaven by violence, was God's act; it was God's providence punishing Esau for former sin. Esau had sinned; he had forfeited his birthright, and he could not get it back. That cry of his, what was it like? it was like the entreaty of the five foolish Virgins when the door was shut, "Lord, Lord, open to us; but He answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not[4]." It was like "the weeping and gnashing of teeth" of lost souls. Yes, surely, a great and bitter cry it well might be. Well may they weep and cry, as they will most largely, who have received God's grace and done despite to it.

The mournful history then which I have been reviewing, is a description of one who was first profane

[1] Heb. xii. 15—17.
[2] 2 Cor. vi. 1.
[3] Prov. i. 28.
[4] Matt. xxv. 11, 12.

and then presumptuous. Esau was profane in selling his birthright, he was presumptuous in claiming the blessing. Afterwards, indeed, he did repent, but when it was too late. And I fear such as Esau was of old time, such are too many Christians now. They despise God's blessings when they are young, and strong, and healthy; then, when they get old, or weak, or sick, they do not think of repenting, but they think they may take and enjoy the privileges of the Gospel as a matter of course, as if the sins of former years went for nothing. And then, perhaps, death comes upon them; and then after death, when it is too late, they would fain repent. Then they utter a great, bitter, and piercing cry to God; and when they see happy souls ascending towards heaven in the fulness of Gospel blessings, they say to their offended God, "Bless me, even me also, O my Father."

Is it not, I say, quite a common case for men and for women to neglect religion in their best days? They have been baptized, they have been taught their duty, they have been taught to pray, they know their Creed, their conscience has been enlightened, they have opportunity to come to Church. This is their birthright, the privileges of their birth of water and of the Spirit; but they sell it, as Esau did. They are tempted by Satan with some bribe of this world, and they give up their birthright in exchange for what is sure to perish, and to make them perish with it. Esau was tempted by the mess of pottage which he saw in Jacob's hands. Satan arrested the eyes of his lust, and he gazed on the pottage, as Eve gazed on the fruit of the tree of knowledge

of good and evil. Adam and Eve sold their birthright for the fruit of a tree—that was their bargain. Esau sold his for a mess of lentils—that was his. And men now-a-days often sell theirs, not indeed for any thing so simple as fruit or herbs, but for some evil gain or other, which at the time they think worth purchasing at any price; perhaps for the enjoyment of some particular sin, or more commonly for the indulgence of general carelessness and spiritual sloth, because they do not like a strict life, and have no heart for God's service. And thus they are profane persons, for they despise the great gift of God.

And then, when all is done and over, and their souls sold to Satan, they never seem to understand that they *have* parted with their birthright. They think that they stand just where they did, before they followed the world, the flesh, and the devil; they take for granted that when they choose to become more decent, or more religious, they have all their privileges just as before. Like Samson, they propose to go out as at other times before, and shake themselves. And like Esau, instead of repenting for the loss of the birthright, they come, as a matter of course, for the blessing. Esau went out to hunt for venison gaily, and promptly brought it to his father. His spirits were high, his voice was cheerful. It did not strike him that God was angry with him for what had past years ago. He thought he was as sure of the blessing as if he had *not* sold the birthright.

And then, alas! the truth flashed upon him; he uttered a great and bitter cry, when it was too late. It would have been well, had he uttered it before he

came for the blessing, not after it. He repented when it was too late—it had been well if he had repented in time. So I say of persons who have in any way sinned. It is good for them not to forget that they have sinned. It is good that they should lament and deplore their past sins. Depend upon it, they will wail over them in the next world, if they wail not here. Which is better, to utter a bitter cry now or then?—then, when the blessing of eternal life is refused them by the just Judge at the last day, or now, in order that they may gain it? Let us be wise enough to have our agony in this world, not in the next. If we humble ourselves now, God will pardon us then. We cannot escape punishment, here or hereafter; we must take our choice, whether to suffer and mourn a little now, or much then.

Would you see how a penitent should come to God? turn to the parable of the Prodigal Son. He, too, had squandered away his birthright, as Esau did. He, too, came for the blessing, like Esau. Yes; but how differently he came! he came with deep confession and self-abasement. He said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants:" but Esau said, "Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me." The one came for a son's privileges, the other for a servant's drudgery. The one killed and dressed his venison with his own hand, and enjoyed it not; for the other the fatted calf was prepared, and the ring for his hand, and shoes for his feet, and the best robe, and there was music and dancing.

These are thoughts, I need hardly say, especially suited to this season. From the earliest times down to this day, these weeks before Easter have been set apart every year, for the particular remembrance and confession of our sins. From the first age downward, not a year has passed but Christians have been exhorted to reflect how far they have let go their birthright, as a preparation for their claiming the blessing. At Christmas we are born again with Christ; at Easter we keep the Eucharistic Feast. In Lent, by penance, we join the two great sacraments together. Are you, my brethren, prepared to say,—is there any single Christian alive who will dare to profess,—that he has not in greater or less degree sinned against God's free mercies as bestowed on him in Baptism without, or rather against his deserts? Who will say that he has so improved his birthright that the blessing is his fit reward, without either sin to confess, or wrath to deprecate? See, then, the Church offers you this season for the purpose. "Now is the accepted time, now the day of salvation." Now it is that, God being your helper, you are to attempt to throw off from you the heavy burden of past transgression, to reconcile yourselves to Him who has once already imparted to you His atoning merits, and you have profaned them.

And be sure of this: that if He has any love for you, if He sees aught of good in your soul, *He* will afflict you, if you will not afflict yourselves. He will not let you escape. He has ten thousand ways of purging those whom He has chosen, from the dross and alloy with which the fine gold is defaced. He can bring diseases on

you, or can visit you with misfortunes, or take away your friends, or oppress your minds with darkness, or refuse you strength to bear up against pain when it comes upon you. He can inflict on you a lingering and painful death. He can make "the bitterness of death pass" not. We, indeed, cannot decide in the case of others, when trouble is a punishment, and when not; yet this we know, that all sin brings affliction. We have no means of judging others, but we may judge ourselves. Let us judge ourselves, that we be not judged. Let us afflict ourselves, that God may not afflict us. Let us come before Him with our best offerings, that He may forgive us.

Such advice is especially suitable to an age like this, when there is an effort on all hands to multiply comforts, and to get rid of the daily inconveniences and distresses of life. Alas! my brethren, how do you know, if you avail yourselves of the luxuries of this world without restraint, but that you are only postponing, and increasing by postponing, an inevitable chastisement? How do you know, but that, if you will not satisfy the debt of daily sin now, it will hereafter come upon you with interest? See whether this is not a thought which would spoil that enjoyment which even religious persons are apt to take in this world's goods, if they would but admit it. It is said that we ought to enjoy this life as the gift of God. Easy circumstances are generally thought a special happiness; it is thought a great point to get rid of annoyance or discomfort of mind and body; it is thought allowable and suitable to make use of all means available for making life pleasant. We

desire, and confess we desire, to make time pass agreeably, and to live in the sunshine. All things harsh and austere are carefully put aside. We shrink from the rude lap of earth, and the embrace of the elements, and we build ourselves houses in which the flesh may enjoy its lust, and the eye its pride. We aim at having all things at our will. Cold, and hunger, and hard lodging, and ill usage, and humble offices, and mean appearance, are all considered serious evils. And thus year follows year, to-morrow as to-day, till we think that this, our artificial life, is our natural state, and must and ever will be. But, O ye sons and daughters of men, what if this fair weather but ensure the storm afterwards? what if it be, that the nearer you attain to making yourselves as gods on earth now, the greater pain lies before you in time to come, or even (if it must be said), the more certain becomes your ruin when time is at an end? Come down, then, from your high chambers at this season to avert what else may be. Sinners as ye are, act at least like the prosperous heathen, who threw his choicest trinket into the water, that he might propitiate fortune. Let not the year go round and round, without a break and interruption in its circle of pleasures. Give back some of God's gifts to God, that you may safely enjoy the rest. Fast, or watch, or abound in alms, or be instant in prayer, or deny yourselves society, or pleasant books, or easy clothing, or take on you some irksome task or employment; do one or other, or some, or all of these, unless you say that you have never sinned, and may go like Esau with a light heart to take your crown. Ever bear in mind that Day which

will reveal all things, and will test all things "so as by fire," and which will bring us into judgment ere it lodges us in heaven.

And for those who have in any grievous way sinned or neglected God, I recommend such persons never to forget they *have* sinned; if they forget it not, God in mercy *will* forget it. I recommend them every day, morning and evening, to fall on their knees, and say, "Lord, forgive me my past sins." I recommend them to pray God to visit their sins in this world rather than in the next. I recommend them to go over their dreadful sins in their minds (unless, alas! it makes them sin afresh to do so), and to confess them to God again and again with great shame, and to entreat His pardon. I recommend them to look on all pain and sorrow which comes on them as a *punishment* for what they once were; and to take it patiently on that account, nay, joyfully, as giving them a hope that God *is* punishing them here instead of hereafter. If they have committed sins of uncleanness, and are now in narrow circumstances, or have undutiful children, let them take their present distress as God's merciful punishment. If they have lived to the world, and now have worldly anxieties, these anxieties are God's punishment. If they have led intemperate lives, and now are afflicted by any malady, this is God's punishment. Let them not cease to pray, under all circumstances, that God will pardon them, and give them back what they have lost. And thus, by God's grace, it shall be restored to them, and Esau's great and bitter cry never shall be theirs.

# SERMON III.

## APOSTOLIC ABSTINENCE A PATTERN FOR CHRISTIANS.

(LENT.)

1 TIM. v. 23.

*"Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities."*

THIS is a remarkable verse, because it accidentally tells us so much. It is addressed to Timothy, St. Paul's companion, the first Bishop of Ephesus. Of Timothy we know very little, except that he did minister to St. Paul, and hence we might have *inferred* that he was a man of very saintly character; but we know little or nothing of him, except that he had been from a child a careful reader of Scripture. This indeed, by itself, in that Apostolic age, would have led us to infer, that he had risen to some great height in spiritual excellence; though it must be confessed that instances are frequent at this day, of persons knowing the Bible well, and yet being little stricter than others in their lives, for all their knowledge. Timothy, however, had so read the Old Testament, and had so heard from St. Paul the New, that he was a true follower of the Apostle, as the

Apostle was of Christ: St. Paul accordingly calls him "my own son," or "my true son in the faith." And elsewhere he says to the Philippians, that he has "no man like-minded to Timothy, who would naturally" or truly "care for their state[1]." But still, after all, this is but a general account of him, and we seem to desire something more definite in the way of description, beyond merely knowing that he was a great saint, which conveys no clear impression to the mind. Now, in the text we have accidentally a glimpse given us of his mode of life. St. Paul does not expressly tell us that he was a man of mortified habits; but he reveals the fact indirectly by cautioning him against an excess of mortification. "Drink no longer water," he says, "but use a little wine." It should be observed, that wine, in the southern countries, is the same ordinary beverage that beer is here; it is nothing strong or costly. Yet even from such as this, Timothy was in the habit of abstaining, and restricting himself to water; and, as the Apostle thought, imprudently, to the increase of his "often infirmities."

There is something very striking in this accidental mention of the private ways of this Apostolical Bishop. We know indeed from history the doctrine and the life of the great saints, who lived some time after the Apostles' age; but we are naturally anxious to know something more of the Apostles themselves, and their associates. We say, "Oh that we could speak to St. Paul,—that we could see him in his daily walk, and hear his oral and familiar teaching!—that we could ask him what he

[1] Phil. ii. 20.

meant by this expression in his Epistles, or what he thought of this or the other doctrine." This is not given to us. God might give us greater light than He does; but it is His gracious will to give us the less. Yet perhaps much more is given us in Scripture, as it has come to us, than we think, if our eyes were enlightened to discern it there. Such, for instance, is the text; it is a sudden revelation, a glimpse of the personal character of Apostolic Christians; it is a hint which we may follow out. For no one will deny that a very great deal of doctrine, and a very great deal of precept, goes with such a fact as this; viz. that this holy man, without impiously disparaging God's creation, and thanklessly rejecting God's gifts, yet, on the whole, lived a life of abstinence.

I cannot at all understand why such a life is not excellent in a Christian now, if it was the characteristic of Apostles, and friends of Apostles, then. I really do not see why the trials and persecutions, which environed them from Jews and Gentiles, their forlorn despised state, and their necessary discomforts, should not even have exempted them from voluntary sufferings in addition; unless such self-imposed hardships were pleasing to Christ. Yet we find that St. Paul, like Timothy, who (as the Apostle says) had known "his doctrine and manner of life[1]," I say, St. Paul also, in addition to his "weariness and painfulness," "hunger and thirst," "cold and nakedness," was "in watchings often," "in fastings often." Such were holy men of old time. How

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 10.

far are we below them! Alas for our easy sensual life, our cowardice, our sloth! is this the way by which the kingdom of heaven is won? is this the way that St. Paul fought a good fight, and finished his course? or was it by putting behind his back all things on earth, and looking stedfastly towards Him who is invisible?

Now at first sight it may not be clear why this moderation, and at least occasional abstinence, in the use of God's gifts, should be so great a duty, as our Lord, for instance, seems to imply, when He places fasting in so prominent a place in the Sermon on the Mount, with almsgiving and prayer. But thus much we are able to see, that the great duty of the Gospel is love to God and man; and that this love is quenched and extinguished by self-indulgence, and cherished by self-denial. They who enjoy this life freely, make it or self their idol; they are gross-hearted, and have no eyes to see God withal. Hence it is said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God[1]." And again, it was the rich man who fared sumptuously every day, who neglected Lazarus; for sensual living hardens the heart, while abstinence softens and refines it. Now, observe, I do not mean that abstinence produces this effect as a matter of course in any given person,—else all the poor ought to be patterns of Christian love,—but that where men are religiously-minded, there those out of the number will make greater attainments in love and devotional feeling, who do exercise themselves in self-denial of the body. I should really be disposed

[1] Matt. v. 8.

to say,—You must make your choice, you must in some way or another deny the flesh, or you cannot possess Christian love. Love is no common grace in its higher degrees. It is true, indeed, that, as being the necessary token of every true Christian, it must be possessed in some degree even by the weakest and humblest of Christ's servants—but in any of its higher and maturer stages, it is rare and difficult. It is easy to be amiable or upright; it is easy to live in regular habits;—it is easy to live conscientiously, in the common sense of the word. I say, all this is comparatively easy; but one thing is needful, and one thing is often lacking,—love. We may act rightly, yet without doing our right actions from the love of God. Other motives, short of love, are good in themselves; these we may have, and not have love. Now I do not think that this defect arises from any one cause, or can be removed by any one remedy; and yet still, it does seem as if abstinence and fasting availed much towards its removal; so much so, that, granting love *is* necessary, then these are necessary; assuming love to be the characteristic of a Christian, so is abstinence. You may think to dispense with fasting; true; and you may neglect also to cultivate love.

And here a connexion may be traced between the truth I have been insisting on, and our Lord's words, when asked why His disciples did not fast. He said, that they could not fast while the Bridegroom was with them; but that when He was taken from them, then they would fast. The one thing, which is all in all to us, is to live in Christ's presence; to hear His voice, to see His countenance. His first disciples had Him in

bodily presence among them; and He spoke to them, warned them, was a pattern to them, and guided them with His eye. But when He withdrew Himself from the world of sense, how should they see Him still? When their fleshly eyes and ears saw Him no more, when He had ascended whither flesh and blood cannot enter, and the barrier of the flesh was interposed between Him and them, how should they any longer see and hear Him? "Lord, whither goest Thou?" they said; and He answered to Peter, "Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." They were to follow Him through the veil, and to break the barrier of the flesh after His pattern. They must, as far as they could, weaken and attenuate what stood between them and Him; they must anticipate that world where flesh and blood are not; they must discern truths which flesh and blood could not reveal; they must live a life, not of sense, but of spirit; they must practise those mortifications which former religions had enjoined, which the Pharisees and John's disciples observed, with better fruit, for a higher end, in a more heavenly way, in order to see Him who is invisible. By fasting, Moses saw God's glory; by fasting, Elijah heard the "still small voice;" by fasting, Christ's disciples were to express their mourning over the Crucified and Dead, over the Bridegroom taken away: but that mourning would bring Him back, that mourning would be turned to joy; in that mourning they would see Him, they would hear of Him, again; they would see Him, as they mourned and wept. And while they mourned, so long would they see Him and

rejoice—for "blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;" they are "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;" hungering and thirsting after and unto righteousness,—fasting in body, that their soul may hunger and thirst after its true good; fasting in body, that they may be satisfied in spirit; in a "barren and dry land, where no water is[1]," that they may look for Him in holiness, and behold His power and glory. "My heart is smitten down, and withered like grass (says the Psalmist), so that I forget to eat my bread. For the voice of my groaning, my bones will scarce cleave to my flesh. I am become like a pelican in the wilderness, and like an owl that is in the desert. I have watched, and am even as a sparrow that sitteth alone upon the house-top." "All day long have I been punished, and chastened every morning." And what was the consequence? "Nevertheless, I am alway by Thee: for Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and after that receive me with glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee? My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever[2]."

Such was the portion which St. Paul and St. Timothy received, when they gave up this world and its blessings; not that they might not have enjoyed them had they chosen; but because they might, and yet gave them up, therefore they received blessings out of sight instead.

[1] Ps. lxiii. 2. [2] Ps. cii. 4—7; lxxiii. 13. 22—25.

And in like manner, applying this to ourselves, it is our duty also to be ever moderate, and at times to abstain, in the use of God's earthly gifts; nay, happy is it for us, if God's secret grace call us on, as it called St. Paul and Timothy, to a more divine and tranquil life than that of the multitude. It is our duty to war against the flesh as they warred against it, that we may inherit the gifts of the Spirit as they inherited them. If Saints are our patterns, this surely means that we must copy them.

Here, however, it may be objected, that there is presumption in wishing to be what Apostles and their associates were. That they had high spiritual gifts which we have not, and that to attempt their life without these, is all one with attempting to work such miracles as they did, which any one would grant to *be* presumptuous. There is much truth in such a remark so far as this, that to attempt *at once* all they did would be presumptuous; we can but put ourselves in the way. God gives second and third gifts to those who improve the first; let us improve the first, and then we know not how high may be the spiritual faculties which at length He will give us. Who is there, who, on setting out on a journey, sees before him his destination? How often, when a person is making for a place which he has never seen, he says to himself, that he cannot believe that at a certain time he really will be there? There is nothing in what he at present sees, which conveys to him the assurance of the future; and yet, in time, that future will be present. So is it as regards our spiritual course: we know not what we shall be; but begin it, and, at

length, by God's grace, you will end it; not, indeed, with the grace He now has given, but by fresh and fresh grace, fuller and fuller, increased according to your need. Thus you will *end*, if you do but begin; but begin not *with* the end; begin with the beginning; mount up the heavenly ladder step by step. Fasting is a duty; but we ought to fast according to our strength. God requires nothing of us beyond our strength; but the utmost according to our strength. "She has done what she could," was His word of commendation to Mary. Now, to forget or to miss this truth, is very common with beginners, even through mere ignorance or inadvertence. They know not what they can do, and what they cannot, as not having yet tried themselves. And then, when what they hoped was easy, proves a great deal too much for them, they fail, and then are dispirited. They wound their conscience, as being unable to fulfil their own resolves, and they are reduced to a kind of despair; or they are tempted to be reckless, and to give up all endeavours whatever to obey God, because they are not strong enough for every thing. And thus it often happens, that men rush from one extreme to another; and even profess themselves free to live without any rule of self-government at all, after having professed great strictness, or even extravagance, in their mode of living.

This applies of course to all duties whatever. We should be very much on our guard, when we are engaged in contemplating the lives of holy men, against attempting just what they did; which might be right indeed in them, and yet may be wrong in us. Holy men may

say and do things which we have no right to say and do. Profession by word of mouth, religious language, rebuking others, and the like, may be natural and proper in them, and forced and out of place in us. We ought to attempt nothing but what we can do. There is a kind of inward feeling which often tells us what we have a right to do, and what we have not. We have often a kind of misgiving, as if what we are tempted to do does not really belong to us. Let us carefully attend to this inward voice. This applies especially to our devotions: common men have no right to use the prayers which advanced Christians use without offending; and if they attempt it, they become *unreal;* an offence which all persons, who have any faith and reverence, will endeavour earnestly to avoid. But if we will thus commence our religious course, it is certain we shall soon get tired of it; we shall give it up; and our devotional feelings will thus be shown, by the event, to have been but a fashion or an impulse, which has no true excellence in it.

And here I will observe, what may be of use even to those who are most cautious and prudent in their mode of conducting their self-denials, supposing they have seasons in which they practise them, such as Lent ought to be to all of us. Be very much on your guard against a reaction to a careless way of life after Lent is over. It is a caution commonly and usefully given, that after a *day* of fasting we should not, when we break our fast, eat unduly; now I am giving a similar warning concerning a *season* of abstinence, and not only as regards eating largely, but against all laxity and self-indulgence. In

Lent, serious thoughts are brought more regularly before the mind. The rule of abstinence which we adopt, however slight it may be in itself, acts as a continual restraint and memento upon us in other things. We cannot range at will through the field of thinking and wishing. We are more frequent also in prayer. And especially, if we feel ourselves able to be strict in our fast, the weakness of body consequent on it is an additional check upon us. Let us beware, then, lest, when this time is over, and Easter comes, we fall back into a lawless state of mind, and a random life, as if God's paradise were some Judaical heaven, where we might indulge ourselves the more freely in this world's goods, for having renounced them for a while. This grievous consequence is said actually to happen in some foreign countries, in the case of the multitude, who never will have a deep and consistent devotion while the world lasts; and we should be much on our guard, lest it happens to us in our degree. It will be a sad thought for remembrance hereafter, if we shall find after all, that we have undone what was right and profitable in our Lent exercises by a relapse in Easter-tide.

This, however, may be added for our encouragement, that to abstain for any length of time is the beginning of a habit; and we may trust, that what we have begun will continue, or tend to continue. And even though, through our frailty, we fall back (which God forbid!), yet we shall find our self-denials easier next Lent. Nay, as I just now said, we shall be able to do more. Self-denial will become natural to us. We shall feel no desire for those indulgences, whether animal or mental,

which savour of this world; and our tastes and likings will begin to be formed upon a heavenly rule. To those who are accustomed to self-denials, it is more painful to indulge than to abstain, as every one of common self-control must know, from ordinary matters of his own experience. Persons in the humbler ranks, of unrefined minds, look up to the rich, and wonder they do not do this or that, which *they* would do for certain, had they the like means. The reason is, that these rich persons, having a more perfect education, have too much taste and sense of propriety, even though religion should be absent, to use their wealth in what may be called a barbarian way. Now the same dislike of self-indulgence, in all its shapes, is matured, under God's grace, in the souls of those who seek Him in the way of austerity. Timothy had to be reminded by St. Paul to use a little wine; for to drink wine was a trouble to Timothy, as putting him (to use a common phrase) out of his way. He was happy in his own way. All men have each his own way, and they wonder at one another. Each looks down upon his neighbour, because his neighbour does not like the very things he likes himself. We look down on foreigners, because their way is not ours. Happy he whose way is God's way; when he is used to it, it is as easy as any other way—nay, much easier, for God's service is perfect freedom, whereas Satan is a cruel taskmaster.

To conclude, let those who attempt to make this Lent profitable to their souls, by such observances as have ever been in use at this season since Christianity was, beware lest they lose this world without gaining the next;—for instance, as I said just now, by relapsing.

Or again, by observing what is in itself right in a cold and formal manner. We can use the means, but it is God alone who blesses them. He alone turns the stones into bread, and brings water from the hard rock. He can turn all things into nourishment, but He alone can do so. Let us pray Him to bless what we venture for Him, that we may not only labour, but may receive our wages, and gather fruit unto life eternal. This world is a very little thing to give up for the next. Yet, if we give it up in heart and conversation, we shall gain the next. Let us aim at the consistent habit of mind, of looking towards God, and rejoicing in the glory which shall be revealed. In that case, whether we eat or drink, or abstain, or whatever we do, we shall do all unto Him. Let us aim at being true heirs of the promise; let us humbly aspire to be His elect, in whom He delighteth, holy and undefiled, "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation," among whom we may shine "as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life."

# SERMON IV.

## CHRIST'S PRIVATIONS A MEDITATION FOR CHRISTIANS.

(FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.)

2 Cor. viii. 9.

*"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."*

AS time goes on, and Easter draws nearer, we are called upon not only to mourn over our sins, but especially over the various sufferings which Christ our Lord and Saviour underwent on account of them. Why is it, my brethren, that we have so little feeling on the matter as we commonly have? Why is it that we are used to let the season come and go just like any other season, not thinking more of Christ than at other times, or, at least, not feeling more? Am I not right in saying that this is the case? and if so, have I not cause for asking why it is the case? We are not moved when we hear of the bitter passion of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for us. We neither bewail our sins which caused it, nor have any sympathy with it. We do not suffer *with* Him. If we come to Church, we hear,

and then we go away again; not distressed at all; or if distressed, only for the moment. And many do not come to Church at all; and to them, of course, this holy and solemn time is like other times. They eat, and drink, and sleep, and rise up, and go about their business and their pleasure, just as usual. They do not carry the thought of Him who died for them, along with them,—with them wherever they are,—with them "whether they eat, or drink, or whatever they do." They in no sense "live," to use St. Paul's words, "by the faith of the Son of God, who loved them and gave Himself for them."

This, alas! cannot be denied. Yet, if it be so, that the Son of God came down from heaven, put aside His glory, and submitted to be despised, cruelly treated, and put to death by His own creatures,—by those whom He had made, and whom He had preserved up to that day, and was then upholding in life and being,—is it reasonable that so great an event should not move us? Does it not stand to reason that we must be in a very irreligious state of mind, unless we have some little gratitude, some little sympathy, some little love, some little awe, some little self-reproach, some little self-abasement, some little repentance, some little desire of amendment, in consequence of what He has done and suffered for us? Or, rather, may not so great a Benefactor demand of us some overflowing gratitude, keen sympathy, fervent love, profound awe, bitter self-reproach, earnest repentance, eager desire and longing after a new heart? Who can deny all this? Why then, O my brethren is it not so? why are things with us

as they are? Alas! I sorrowfully foretell that time will go on, and Passion-tide, Good Friday, and Easter-Day will pass by, and the weeks after it, and many of you will be just what you were—not at all nearer heaven, not at all nearer Christ in your hearts and lives, not impressed lastingly or savingly with the thought of His mercies and your own sins and demerits.

But why is this? why do you so little understand the Gospel of your salvation? why are your eyes so dim, and your ears so hard of hearing? why have you so little faith? so little of heaven in your hearts? For this one reason, my brethren, if I must express my meaning in one word, because you so little *meditate*. You do not meditate, and therefore you are not impressed.

What is meditating on Christ? it is simply this, thinking habitually and constantly of Him and of His deeds and sufferings. It is to have Him before our minds as One whom we may contemplate, worship, and address when we rise up, when we lie down, when we eat and drink, when we are at home and abroad, when we are working, or walking, or at rest, when we are alone, and again when we are in company; this is meditating. And by this, and nothing short of this, will our hearts come to feel as they ought. We have stony hearts, hearts as hard as the highways; the history of Christ makes no impression on them. And yet, if we would be saved, we must have tender, sensitive, living hearts; our hearts must be broken, must be broken up like ground, and dug, and watered, and tended, and cultivated, till they become as gardens, gardens of Eden, acceptable to our God, gardens in which the Lord God

may walk and dwell; filled, not with briars and thorns, but with all sweet-smelling and useful plants, with heavenly trees and flowers. The dry and barren waste must burst forth into springs of living water. This change must take place in our hearts if we would be saved; in a word, we must have what we have not by nature, faith and love; and how is this to be effected, under God's grace, but by godly and practical meditation through the day?

St. Peter describes what I mean, when he says, speaking of Christ, "Whom having not seen ye love: in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory[1]."

Christ is gone away; He is not seen; we never saw Him, we only read and hear of Him. It is an old saying, "Out of sight, out of mind." Be sure, so it *will* be, so it *must* be with us, as regards our blessed Saviour, unless we make continual efforts all through the day to think of Him, His love, His precepts, His gifts, and His promises. We must recall to mind what we read in the Gospels and in holy books about Him; we must bring before us what we have heard in Church; we must pray God to enable us to do so, to bless the doing so, and to make us do so in a simple-minded, sincere, and reverential spirit. In a word, we must meditate, for all this is meditation; and this even the most unlearned person can do, and will do, if he has a will to do it.

Now of such meditation, or thinking over Christ's deeds and sufferings, I will say two things; the first of

[1] 1 Pet. i. 8.

which would be too plain to mention, except that, did I not mention it, I might seem to forget it, whereas I grant it. It is this: that such meditation is not at all pleasant at first. I know it; people will find it at first very irksome, and their minds will gladly slip away to other subjects. True: but consider, if Christ thought your salvation worth the great sacrifice of voluntary sufferings for you, should not you think (what is your own concern) your own salvation worth the slight sacrifice of learning to meditate upon those sufferings? Can a less thing be asked of you, than, when He has done the work, that you should only have to believe in it and accept it?

And my second remark is this: that it is only by slow degrees that meditation is able to soften our hard hearts, and that the history of Christ's trials and sorrows really moves us. It is not once thinking of Christ or twice thinking of Christ that will do it. It is by going on quietly and steadily, with the thought of Him in our mind's eye, that by little and little we shall gain something of warmth, light, life, and love. We shall not perceive ourselves changing. It will be like the unfolding of the leaves in spring. You do not see them grow; you cannot, by watching, detect it. But every day, as it passes, has done something for them; and you are able, perhaps, every morning to say that they are more advanced than yesterday. So is it with our souls; not indeed every morning, but at certain periods, we are able to see that we are more alive and religious than we were, though during the interval we were not conscious that we were advancing.

Now, then, as if by way of specimen, I will say a few words upon the voluntary self-abasement of Christ, to suggest to you thoughts, which you ought, indeed, to bear about you at all times, but especially at this most holy season of the year; thoughts which will in their poor measure (please God) prepare you for seeing Christ in heaven, and, in the meanwhile, will prepare you for seeing Him in His Easter Festival. Easter-Day comes but once a year; it is short, like other days. O that we may make much of it, that we may make the most of it, that we may enjoy it! O that it may not pass over like other days, and leave us no fragrance after it to remind us of it!

Come then, my brethren, at this time, before the solemn days are present, and let us review some of the privations of the Son of God made man, which should be your meditation through these holy weeks.

And, chiefly, He seems to speak to the poor. He came in *poverty*. St. Paul says, in the text, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Let not the poor suppose that their hardships are their own only, and that no one else ever felt them. The Most High God, God the Son, who had reigned with the Father from everlasting, supremely blessed, He, even He, became a poor man, and suffered the hardships of the poor. What are their hardships? I suppose such as these:—that they have bad lodging, bad clothing, not enough to eat, or of a poor kind, that they have few pleasures or amusements, that they are despised, that they are dependent upon

others for their living, and that they have no prospects for the future. Now how was it with Christ, the Son of the Living God? Where was He born? In a stable. I suppose not many men suffer an indignity so great; born, not in quiet and comfort, but amid the brute cattle; and what was His first cradle, if I may so call it? a manger. Such were the beginnings of His earthly life; nor did His condition mend as life went on. He says on one occasion, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head[1]." He had no home. He was, when He began to preach, what would now be called with contempt a vagrant. There are persons who are obliged to sleep where they can; such, in good measure, seems to have been our blessed Lord. We hear of Martha who was hospitable to Him, and of others; but, though little is told us, He seems, from what *is* told, to have lived a rougher life than any village peasant. He was forty days in the wilderness: where do you think He slept then? in caves of the rock. And who were His companions then? worse companions even than those He was born among. He was born in a cave; He passed forty nights in a cave; but on His birth, at least, they were tame beasts whom He was among, the ox and the ass. But during His forty days' temptation He "was with the wild beasts." Those caverns in the wilderness are filled with fierce and poisonous creatures. There Christ slept; and doubtless, but for His Father's unseen arm and

[1] Luke ix. 58.

His own sanctity, they would have fallen upon Him.

Again, cold is another hardship which sensibly afflicts us. This, too, Christ endured. He remained whole nights in prayer upon the mountains. He rose before day and went into solitary places to pray. He was on the sea at night.

Heat is a suffering which does not afflict us much in our country, but is very formidable in the eastern parts, where our Saviour lived. Men keep at home when the sun is high, lest it should harm them; yet we read of His sitting down on Jacob's well at mid-day, being wearied with His journey.

Observe this also, to which I have already referred. He was constantly journeying during His ministry, and journeying on foot. Once He rode into Jerusalem, to fulfil a prophecy.

Again, He endured hunger and thirst. He was athirst at the well, and asked the Samaritan woman to give Him water to drink. He was hungry in the wilderness, when He fasted forty days. At another time, when actively engaged in His works of mercy, He and His disciples had no time to eat bread[1]. And, indeed, wandering about as He did, He seldom could have been certain of a meal. And what was the kind of food He lived on? He was much in the neighbourhood of an inland sea or lake, called the sea of Gennesaret, or Tiberias, and He and His Apostles lived on bread and fish; as spare a diet as poor men have now, or sparer.

[1] Mark vi. 31.

We hear, on one well-known occasion, of five barley loaves and two small fishes. After His resurrection He provided for His Apostles—"a fire, and fish laid thereon, and bread[1];" as it would seem, their usual fare.

Yet it deserves notice that, in spite of this penury, He and His were in the custom of giving something to the poor notwithstanding. They did not allow themselves to make the most even of the little they had. When the traitor Judas rose up and went out to betray Him, and Jesus spoke to him, some of the Apostles thought that He was giving directions about alms to the poor; this shows His practice.

And He was, as need scarcely be added, quite dependent on others. Sometimes rich men entertained Him. Sometimes, as I have said, pious persons ministered to Him of their substance[2]. He lived, in His own blessed words, like the ravens, whom God feeds, or like the grass of the field, which God clothes.

Need I add that He had few pleasures, few recreations? it is hardly in place to speak on such a topic in the case of One who came from God, and who had other thoughts and ways than we have. Yet there are innocent enjoyments which God gives us here to counterbalance the troubles of life; our Lord was exposed to the trouble, and might have taken also its compensation. But He refrained. It has been observed, that He is never spoken of as mirthful; we often read of His sighing, groaning, and weeping. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

[1] John xxi. 9. [2] Luke viii. 3.

Now let us proceed to other greater sufferings, which He took on Himself when He became poor. Contempt, hatred, and persecution from the world was one of these. Even in His infancy Mary had to flee with Him into Egypt to hinder Herod from killing Him. When He returned, it was not safe to dwell in Judea, and He was brought up at Nazareth, a place of evil name, where the holy Virgin had been when Gabriel the Angel came to her. I need not say how He was set at nought and persecuted by the Pharisees and priests when He began to preach, and had again and again to flee for His life, which they were bent on taking.

Another great suffering from which our Lord did not withdraw Himself, was what in our case we call bereavement, the loss of relations or friends by death. This, indeed, it was not easy for Him to sustain, who had but one earthly near relation, and so few friends; but even this affliction He tasted for our sakes. Lazarus was His friend, and He lost him. He knew, indeed, that He could restore him; and He did. Yet still He bitterly lamented him, for whatever reason, so that the Jews said, "Behold how He loved him." But a greater and truer bereavement, as far as we dare speak of it, was His original act of humiliation itself, in leaving His heavenly glory and coming down on earth. This, of course, is a great mystery to us from beginning to end; still, He certainly vouchsafes to speak, through His Apostle, of His "emptying Himself" of His glory; so that we may fairly and reverently consider it as an unspeakable and wondrous bereavement, which He under-

went, in being for the time, as it were, disinherited, and made in the likeness of sinful flesh.

But all these were but the beginning of sorrows with Him; to see their fulness we must look on to His passion. In the anguish which He then endured, we see all His other sorrows concentrated and exceeded; though I shall say little of it now, when His "time is not yet come."

But I will observe thus much; first, what is very wonderful and awful, the overwhelming fear He had of His sufferings before they came. This shows how great they were; but it would seem besides this, as if He had decreed to go through all trials for us, and, among them, the trial of fear. He says, "Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour." And when the hour came, this terror formed the beginning of His sufferings, and caused His agony and bloody sweat. He prayed, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Thine, be done." St. Luke adds; "And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground[1]."

Next, He was betrayed to death by one of His own friends. What a bitter stroke was this! He was lonely enough without this: but in this last trial, one of the twelve Apostles, His own familiar friend, betrayed Him, and the others forsook Him and fled; though St. Peter and St. John afterwards recovered heart a little, and

[1] John xii. 27. Matt. xxvi. 39. Luke xxii. 44.

followed Him. Yet soon St. Peter himself incurred a worse sin, by denying Him thrice. How affectionately He felt towards them, and how He drew towards them with a natural movement of heart upon the approach of His trial, though they disappointed Him, is plain from the words He used towards them at His Last Supper; "He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer[1]."

Soon after this His sufferings began; and both in soul and in body was this Holy and Blessed Saviour, the Son of God, and Lord of life, given over to the malice of the great enemy of God and man. Job was given over to Satan in the Old Testament, but within prescribed limits; first, the Evil One was not allowed to touch his person, and afterwards, though his person, yet not his life. But Satan had power to triumph, or what he thought was triumphing, over the life of Christ, who confesses to His persecutors, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness[2]." His head was crowned and torn with thorns, and bruised with staves; His face was defiled with spitting; His shoulders were weighed down with the heavy cross; His back was rent and gashed with scourges; His hands and feet gored through with nails; His side, by way of contumely, wounded with the spear; His mouth parched with intolerable thirst; and His soul so bedarkened, that He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me[3]?" And thus He hung upon the Cross for six hours, His whole body one wound, exposed almost naked to the eyes

[1] Luke xxii. 15. [2] Luke xxii. 53. [3] Matt. xxvii. 46.

of men, "despising the shame[1]," and railed at, taunted, and cursed by all who saw Him. Surely to Him alone, in their fulness, apply the Prophet's words; "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow which is done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger[2]."

How little are our sorrows to these! how little is our pain, our hardships, our persecutions, compared with those which Christ voluntarily undertook for us! If He, the sinless, underwent these, what wonder is it that we sinners should endure, if it so be, the hundredth part of them? How base and miserable are we, for understanding them so little, for being so little impressed by them! Alas! if we felt them as we ought, of course they would be to us, at seasons such as that now coming, far worse than what the death of a friend is, or his painful illness. We should not be able at such times to take pleasure in this world; we should lose our enjoyment of things of earth; we should lose our appetite, and be sick at heart, and only as a matter of duty eat, and drink, and go about our work. The Holy Season on which we shall soon enter would be a week of mourning, as when a dead body is in a house. We cannot, indeed, thus feel, merely because we wish and ought so to feel. We cannot force ourselves into so feeling. I do not exhort this man or that so to feel, since it is not in his power. We cannot work ourselves up into such feelings; or, if we can, it is better we should not,

[1] Heb. xii. 2. [2] Lam. i. 12.

because it *is* a working up, which is bad. Deep feeling is but the natural or necessary attendant on a holy heart. But though we cannot at our will thus feel, and at once, we can go the way thus to feel. We can grow in grace till we thus feel. And, meanwhile, we can observe such an outward abstinence from the innocent pleasures and comforts of life, as may prepare us for thus feeling; such an abstinence as we should spontaneously observe if we did thus feel. We may meditate upon Christ's sufferings; and by this meditation we *shall* gradually, as time goes on, be brought to these deep feelings. We may pray God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, to *make* us feel; to give us the spirit of gratitude, love, reverence, self-abasement, godly fear, repentance, holiness, and lively faith.

# SERMON V.

## CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD MADE MAN.

(FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.)

HEB. ix. 11.

*"Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building."*

BEFORE the Passover the Jews numbered fourteen days, and then the Feast came. It was to be the fourteenth day of the month, at even; and to mark the beginning of that period more distinctly, it was made the beginning of months, that is, the first month of the year. We then, if our Easter answers to the Passover, as substance answers to shadow, may well account that from this day, which is fourteen days before Easter, a more sacred season begins. And so our Church seems to have determined it, since from this day, the character of the Services changes. Henceforth they have more immediate reference to Him, whose death and resurrection we are soon to commemorate. The first weeks in Lent are spent in repentance, though with the thought of Him withal, who alone can give grace and

power to our penitential exercises; the last, without precluding repentance, are more especially consecrated to the thought of those sufferings, whereby grace and power were purchased for us.

The history of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; of Dinah, Jacob's daughter; and of Joseph in Potiphar's house; the account of our Lord's temptation; and the parable of the man out of whom the evil spirit went and returned sevenfold, which have been read on Sundays at this season, may fitly be called penitential subjects; and of the same character have been the Epistles. On the other hand, to-day's Epistle[1], from which the text is taken, speaks of Christ's Incarnation and Atonement; while the Gospel tells us of His Divinity, He being that same God who, as the first Morning Lesson relates, called Himself in the bush "I am that I am." And so again, next Sunday's Epistle is also upon our Lord's Divinity and voluntary humiliation, and one of the Lessons and the Gospel contain the sacred narrative of His passion and death. The other second Lesson is also on the subject of His humiliation, from St. Paul. And further: all four first Lessons of to-day and next Sunday relate to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, which is the type of our redemption.

Let us then to-day, in accordance with the apparent disposition of our Services, remind ourselves of one or two of the great truths which the Epistle contains;—of course we cannot do so with any great exactness or completeness;—but still, sufficiently to serve, through God's mercy, as a sort of preparation for the solemn

days which lie before us in the course of the next fortnight. It will be a fitting preparation, please God, for Good Friday, to bear in mind who our Lord is, and what He has done for us. And, at present, let us confine ourselves to this one subject, who our Lord is,—God and man in one Person. On this most sacred and awful subject, I shall speak as simply and plainly as I can; merely stating what has to be stated, after the pattern of the Creeds, and leaving those who hear me, as the Creeds leave them, to receive it into their hearts fruitfully, and to improve it, under God's grace, for themselves.

Let us, I say, consider who Christ is, as the Epistle for the day sets forth in the words of the text.

1. First, Christ is God: from eternity He was the Living and True God. This is not mentioned expressly in the Epistle for this day, though it is significantly implied there in various ways; but it is all but expressly stated, and that by Himself, in the Gospel. He says there, "Before Abraham was, I am[1]:" by which words He declares that He did not begin to exist from the Virgin's womb, but had been in existence before. And by using the words *I am*, He seems to allude, as I have already said, to the Name of God, which was revealed to Moses in the burning bush, when he was commanded to say to the children of Israel, "*I am* hath sent me unto you[2]." Again: St. Paul says of Christ, that He was "in the form of God," and "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," yet "made Himself of no reputation." In like manner St. John says; "In the beginning was the Word,

[1] John viii. 58. [2] Exod. iii. 14.

and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And St. Thomas addressed Him as his Lord and his God; and St. Paul declares that He is "God over all, blessed for ever;" and the prophet Isaiah, that He is "the mighty God, the Everlasting Father;" and St. Paul again, that He is "our great God and Saviour;" and St. Jude, that He is "our only Sovereign God and Lord[1]." It is not necessary, surely, to enlarge on this point, which is constantly brought before us in Scripture and in our Services. "Day by day we magnify Him, and we worship His Name ever world without end;" which would be idolatry were He not the Very and Eternal God, our Maker and Lord. We know, indeed, that the Father is God also; and so is the Holy Ghost; but still Christ is God and Lord, most fully, completely, and entirely, in all attributes as perfect and as adorable, as if nothing had been told us of Father or of Holy Ghost; as much to be adored, as, before He came in the flesh, the Father was adored by the Jews, and is now to be adored by us "in spirit and in truth." For He tells us expressly Himself, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father;" and "all men" are to "honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;" and "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him[2]."

2. And here we are brought to the second point of doctrine which it is necessary to insist upon, that while our Lord is God He is also the Son of God, or rather,

[1] Phil. ii. 6, 7. John i. 1; xx. 28. Rom. ix. 5. Isa. ix. 6. Tit. ii. 13. Jude 4.

[2] John xiv. 9; v. 23.

that He is God because He is the Son of God. We are apt, at first hearing, to say that He is God though He is the Son of God, marvelling at the mystery. But what to man is a mystery, to God is a cause. He is God, not *though*, but *because* He is the Son of God. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and That which is begotten of God is God. I do not say that we could presume thus to reason for ourselves, but Scripture draws the conclusion for us. Christ tells us Himself, "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." And St. Paul says, that He is "the brightness of God's glory, and the express Image of His Person[1]." And thus, though we could not presume to reason of ourselves that He that is begotten of God is God, as if it became us to reason at all about such ineffable things, yet, by the light of Scripture, we may. And after all, if the truth must be said, it is surely not so marvellous and mysterious that the Son of God should be God, as that there should be a Son of God at all. It is as little level to natural reason that God should have a Son, as that, if there be a Son, He must be God because He is the Son. Both are mysteries; and if we admit with Scripture that there be an Only-begotten Son, it is even less to admit, what Scripture also teaches, that that Only-begotten Son is God because He is Only-begotten. And this is what makes the doctrine of our Lord's Eternal Sonship of such supreme importance, viz. that He is God because He is begotten of God; and they who give up the latter

[1] John v. 26. Heb. i. 3.

truth, are in the way to give up, or will be found already to have given up, the former. The great safeguard to the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity is the doctrine of His Sonship; we realize that He is God only when we acknowledge Him to be by nature and from eternity Son.

Nay, our Lord's Sonship is not only the guarantee to us of His Godhead, but also the antecedent of His incarnation. As the Son was God, so on the other hand was the Son suitably made man; it belonged to Him to have the Father's perfections, it became Him to assume a servant's form. We must beware of supposing that the Persons of the Ever-blessed and All-holy Trinity differ from each other only in this, that the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father. They differ in this besides, that the Father *is* the Father, and the Son *is* the Son. While They are one in substance, Each has distinct characteristics which the Other has not. Surely those sacred Names have a meaning in them, and must not lightly be passed over. And they will be found, if we reverently study them, to supply a very merciful use towards our understanding Scripture; for we shall see a fitness, I say, now that that sacred truth is revealed, in the *Son* of God taking flesh, and we shall thereby understand better what He says of Himself in the Gospels. The Son of God became the Son a second time, though not a second Son, by becoming man. He was a Son both before His incarnation, and, by a second mystery, after it. From eternity He had been the Only-begotten in the bosom of the Father; and when He came on earth, this essential relation to the Father remained

unaltered; still, He was a Son, when in the form of a servant,—still performing the will of the Father, as His Father's Word and Wisdom, manifesting His glory and accomplishing His purposes.

For instance, take the following passages of Scripture: "I do nothing of Myself;" "He that sent Me is with Me;" "the Father hath not left Me alone;" "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" "Whatsoever I speak, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak;" "I am in the Father, and the Father in Me[1]." Now, it is true, these passages may be understood of our Lord's human nature; but, surely, if we confine them to this interpretation, we run the risk of viewing Christ as two separate beings, not as one Person; or, again, of gradually forgetting and explaining away the doctrine of His Divinity altogether. If we speak as if our Lord had a human personality, then, if He has another personality as God, He is not one Person; and if He has not, He is not God. Such passages, then, as the foregoing, would seem to speak neither of Christ's human nature, nor of His divine, solely, but of both together; that is, of Him who being the Son of God is also man. He who spoke was one really existing Person, and He, that one Living and Almighty Son, both God and man, was the brightness of God's glory and His Power, and wrought what His Father and He willed, and was in the Father and the Father in Him, not only from eternity but in time. From eternity He was this, and did this, as God; and in time He was this, and did this, in that manhood

[1] John viii. 28, 29; v. 17; xii. 50; xiv. 10.

which He assumed. It was therefore true of Him *altogether*, when He spoke, that He was not alone, nor spoke or wrought of Himself, but where He was, there was the Father, and whoso had seen Him had seen the Father, whether we think of Him as God or as man.

Again, we read in Scripture of His being sent by the Father, addressing the Father, interceding to Him for His disciples, and declaring to them that His Father is greater than He; in what sense says and does He all this? Some will be apt to say that He speaks only in His human nature; which words are perplexing to the mind that tries really to contemplate Him as Scripture describes Him, as if He were speaking only under a character, and not in His Person. No; it is truer to say that He, that One All-gracious Son of God, who had been with the Father from the beginning, equal in all divine perfections and one in substance, but subordinate as being the Son,—as He had ever been His Word, and Wisdom, and Counsel, and Will, and Power in Heaven,—so after His incarnation, and upon the earth, still spoke and acted after, yet with, the Father as before, though in a new nature, which He had put on, and in humiliation.

This, then, is the second point of doctrine which I had to mention, that our Lord was not only God, but the Son of God. We know more than that God took on Him our flesh; though all is mysterious, we have a point of knowledge further and more distinct, viz. that it was neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost, but the Son of the Father, God the Son, God from God, and Light from Light, who came down upon earth, and who thus,

though graciously taking on Him a new nature, remained as He had been from everlasting, the *Son* of the Father, and spoke and acted towards the Father as a Son.

3. Now, thirdly, let us proceed to consider His mercy in taking on Him our nature, and what that act of mercy implies. The text speaks of "a greater and more perfect tabernacle," that is, greater than any thing earthly. This means His pure and sinless flesh, which was miraculously formed of the substance of the Blessed Virgin, and therefore called "not of this building," or more literally, "not of this creation," for it was a new creation by which He was formed, even by the descent of the Holy Ghost. This was the new and perfect tabernacle into which He entered; entered, but not to be confined, not to be circumscribed by it. The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; though His own hands "made it and fashioned it," still He did not cease to be what He was, because He became man, but was still the Infinite God, manifested in, not altered by the flesh. He took upon Him our nature, as an instrument of His purposes, not as an agent in the work. What is one thing cannot become another; His manhood remained human, and His Godhead remained divine. God became man, yet was still God, having His manhood as an adjunct, perfect in its kind, but dependent upon His Godhead. So much so, that unless Scripture had expressly called Him man, we might well have scrupled to do so. Left to ourselves, we might have felt it more reverential to have spoken of Him, as *incarnate* indeed, come in human flesh, human and the like, but not simply

as man. But St. Paul speaks in plain terms of our one Mediator as "the man Christ Jesus," not to speak of our Lord's own words on the subject. Still, we must ever remember, that though He was in nature perfect man, He was not man in exactly the same sense in which any one of us is a man. Though man, He was not, strictly speaking, in the English sense of the word, *a* man; He was not such as one of us, and one out of a number. He was man because He had our human nature wholly and perfectly, but His Person is not human like ours, but divine. He who was from eternity, continued one and the same, but with an addition. His incarnation was a "taking of the manhood into God." As He had no earthly father, so has He no human personality. We may not speak of Him as we speak of any individual man, acting from and governed by a human intelligence within Him, but He was God, acting not only as God, but now through the flesh also, when He would. He was not a man made God, but God made man.

(1.) Thus, when He prayed to His Father, it was not the prayer of a man supplicating God, but of the Eternal Son of God who had ever shared the glory of the Father, addressing Him, as before, but under far other circumstances, and in a new way, not according to those most intimate and ineffable relations which belonged to Him who was in the bosom of the Father, but in the economy of redemption, and in a lower world, viz. through the feelings and thoughts of human nature. When He wept at the grave of Lazarus, or sighed at the Jews' hardness of heart, or looked round about in anger, or had compassion on the multitudes, He manifested

the tender mercy, the compassion, the long-suffering, the fearful wrath of Almighty God, yet not in Himself, as from eternity, but as if indirectly through the outlets of that manhood with which He had clothed Himself.

(2.) When "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay[1]," He exerted the virtue of His Divine Essence through the properties and circumstances of the flesh. When He breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost[2]," He vouchsafed to give His Holy Spirit through the breath of His human nature. When virtue went out of Him, so that whoso touched Him was made whole, here too, in like manner, He shows us that He was not an individual man, like any of us, but God acting through human nature as His assumed instrument.

(3.) When He poured out His precious blood upon the Cross, it was not a man's blood, though it belonged to His manhood, but blood full of power and virtue, instinct with life and grace, as issuing most mysteriously from Him who was the Creator of the world. And the case is the same in every successive communication of Himself to individual Christians. As He became the Atoning Sacrifice by means of His human nature, so is He our High Priest in heaven by means of the same. He is now in heaven, entered into the Holy place, interceding for us, and dispensing blessings to us. He gives us abundantly of His Spirit; but still

[1] John ix. 6. [2] John xx. 22.

He gives It not at once from His Divine nature, though from eternity the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father, but by means of that incorruptible flesh which He has taken on Him. For Christ is come a High Priest through the perfect tabernacle which He assumed, a tabernacle not of this creation, or in the ordinary course of nature, but framed miraculously of the substance of the Virgin by the Holy Ghost; and therefore the streams of life flow to us from Him, as God indeed, but still as God incarnate. "That which quickeneth us is the Spirit of the Second Adam, and His flesh is that wherewith He quickeneth."

(4.) I shall mention a fourth and last point in this great mystery. I have said that our High Priest and Saviour, the Son of God, when He took our nature upon Him, acted through it, without ceasing to be what He was before, making it but the instrument of His gracious purposes. But it must not be supposed, because it was an instrument, or because in the text it is called a tabernacle, that therefore it was not intimately one with Him, or that it was merely like what is commonly meant by a tabernacle, which a man dwells in, and may come in and out of; or like an instrument, which a man takes up and lays down. Far from it; though His Divine Nature was sovereign and supreme when He became incarnate, yet the manhood which He assumed was not kept at a distance from Him (if I may so speak) as a mere instrument, or put on as a mere garment, or entered as a mere tabernacle, but it was really taken into the closest and most ineffable union

with Him. He received it into His Divine Essence (if we may dare so to speak) almost as a new attribute of His Person; of course I speak by way of analogy, but I mean as simply and indissolubly. Let us consider what is meant by God's justice, or mercy, or wisdom, and we shall perhaps have some glimpse of the meaning of the inspired writers, when they speak of the Son's incarnation. If we said that the Son of God is just or merciful, we should mean that these are attributes which attach to all He is or was. Whatever He says, whatever He designs, whatever He works, He is just and loving when He thus says, designs, or works! There never was a moment, there never was an act or providence, in which God wrought, without His being just and loving, even though both attributes may not be exercised at once in the same act. In somewhat the same way the Son of God is man; all that is necessary to constitute a perfect manhood is attached to His eternal Person absolutely and entirely, belonging to Him as really and fully as His justice, truth, or power; so that it would be as unmeaning to speak of dividing one of His attributes from Him as to separate from Him His manhood.

This throws light upon the Catholic tenet, that the Godhead and Manhood were "joined together in One Person, never to be divided;" words which also serve too often to bring home to us how faintly we master the true doctrine: for we are sometimes tempted to ask, where is it said in Scripture that the manhood shall never be divided from the Godhead? which is as incongruous a question as if we were to ask whether God's

justice, mercy, or holiness can be divided from Him; or whether Scripture ever declares that this or that attribute may not disappear: for as these have no real existence except as *in* God, neither has our Lord's manhood except as in His Divine nature; it never subsisted except as belonging to His divinity; it has no subsistence in itself.

Thus all that He did and said on earth was but the immediate deed and word of God the Son acting by means of His human tabernacle. He surrounded Himself with it; He lodged it within Him; and thenceforth the Eternal Word, the Son of God, the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity, had two natures, the one His own as really as the other, Divine and human; and He acted through both of them, sometimes through both at once, sometimes through One and not through the other, as Almighty God acts sometimes by the attribute of justice, sometimes by that of love, sometimes through both together. He was as entirely man as if He had ceased to be God, as fully God as if He had never become man, as fully both at once as He was in being at all.

The Athanasian Creed expresses all this as follows: "The right faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God is God and Man; God of the substance of His Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the substance of His Mother, born in the world. Perfect God; and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting: who, although He be God and Man, yet is not two but one Christ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh," as if He

could cease to be God, "but by taking of the Manhood into God," taking it into His Divine Person as His own: "one altogether, not by confusion of substance," not by the Divine Nature and the human becoming some one new nature, as if He ceased to be God, and did not become a man, "but by unity of *Person*." This is what His unity consists in,—not unity of nature, but in this, that He who came on earth, was the very Same who had been from everlasting.

In conclusion, let me observe, that we ought not to speak, we ought not to hear, such high truths, without great reverence and awe, and preparation of mind. And this is a reason, perhaps, why this is a proper season for dwelling on them; when we have been engaged, not in mirth and festivity, but in chastening and sobering ourselves. The Psalmist says, "Lord, I am not high minded; I have no proud looks. I do not exercise myself in great matters which are too high for me. But I refrain my soul and keep it low, like as a child that is weaned from his mother." When we are engaged in weaning ourselves from this world, when we are denying ourselves even lawful things, when we have a subdued tone of thought and feeling, then is an allowable time surely to speak of the high mysteries of the faith. And then, too, are they especially a comfort to us; but those who neglect fasting, make light of orthodoxy too. But to those who through God's grace are otherwise minded, the Creed of the Church brings relief; when, amid the gloom of their own hearts, Christ rises like the Sun of righteousness, giving them peace for disquiet, "beauty

for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

# SERMON VI.

## THE INCARNATE SON, A SUFFERER AND SACRIFICE.

(SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT.)

PHIL. ii. 8.

*"Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."*

HE who thus humbled Himself—being first made man, then dying, and that upon the shameful and agonizing Cross—was the same who from eternity had been "in the form of God," and was "equal with God," as the Apostle declares in a preceding verse. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God;" thus speaks St. John, a second witness to the same great and awful truth. And he, too, goes on to say, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." And at the close of his Gospel, as we know, he gives an account of our Lord's death upon the Cross.

We are now approaching that most sacred day when we commemorate Christ's passion and death. Let us try to fix our minds upon this great thought. Let us try, what is so very difficult, to put off other thoughts,

to clear our minds of things transitory, temporal, and earthly, and to occupy them with the contemplation of the Eternal Priest and His one ever-enduring Sacrifice; —that Sacrifice which, though completed once for all on Calvary, yet ever abideth, and, in its power and its grace, is ever present among us, and is at all times gratefully and awfully to be commemorated, but now especially, when the time of year is come at which it was made. Let us look upon Him who was lifted up that He might draw us to Him; and, by being drawn one and all to Him, let us be drawn to each other, so that we may understand and feel that He has redeemed us one and all, and that, unless we love one another, we cannot really have love to Him who laid down His life for us.

With the hope, then, of suggesting to you some serious thoughts for the week which begins with this day, I will make a few remarks, such as the text suggests, upon that dreadful yet most joyful event, the passion and death of our Lord.

And, first, it ought not to be necessary to say, though it may be necessary even because it is so obvious,—(for, what is very plain is sometimes taken for granted by those who know it, and hence is never heard by others at all,)—this, I say, in the first place, must be ever remembered, that Christ's death was not a mere martyrdom. A martyr is one who dies for the Church, who is put to death for preaching and maintaining the truth. Christ, indeed, was put to death for preaching the Gospel; yet He was not a Martyr, but He was much more than a Martyr. Had He been a mere man, He would have been rightly called a Martyr, but as He

was not a mere man, so He was not a mere Martyr. Man dies as a Martyr, but the Son of God dies as an Atoning Sacrifice.

Here then, as you see, we are at once introduced into a very mysterious subject, though one which concerns us most nearly. There was a virtue in His death, which there could be in no other, for He was God. *We*, indeed, could not have told beforehand what would follow from so high an event as God becoming incarnate and dying on the Cross; but that something extraordinary and high would issue from it, we might have been quite sure, though nothing had been told us. He would not have so humbled Himself for nought; He could not so humble Himself (if I may use the expression) without momentous consequences.

It would be well if we opened our minds to what is meant by the doctrine of the Son of God dying on the Cross for us. I do not say we shall ever be able to solve the mystery of it, but we may understand in what the Mystery consists; and that is what many men are deficient in. They have no clear views what the truth of the matter is; if they had, it would make them more serious than they are. Let it be understood, then, that the Almighty Son of God, who had been in the bosom of the Father from everlasting, became man; became man as truly as He was always God. He was God from God, as the Creed says; that is, as being the Son of the Father, He had all those infinite perfections from the Father which the Father had. He was of one substance with the Father, and was God, because the Father was God. He was truly God, but He became as truly man.

He became man, yet so as not to cease in any respect being what He was before. He added a new nature to Himself, yet so intimately, that it was *as if* He had actually left His former self, which He did not. "The Word became flesh:" even this would seem mystery and marvel enough, but even this was not all; not only was He "made man," but, as the Creed goes on to state, He "was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried."

Now here, I say, is a fresh mystery in the history of His humiliation, and the thought of it will cast a new and solemn light on the chapters we shall read during the week. I have said that, after His incarnation, man's nature was as much and as truly Christ's as His Divine attributes; St. Paul even speaks of God "purchasing us with His own blood," and of the "Lord of glory" being "killed,"—expressions which, more than any other, show how absolutely and simply He had put on Him the nature of man. As the soul acts through the body as its instrument,—in a more perfect way, but as intimately, did the Eternal Word of God act through the manhood which He had taken. When He spoke, it was literally God speaking; when He suffered, it was God suffering. Not that the Divine Nature itself could suffer, any more than our soul can see or hear; but, as the soul sees and hears through the organs of the body, so God the Son suffered *in* that human nature which He had taken to Himself and made His own. And in that nature He did truly suffer; as truly as He framed the worlds through His Almighty power, so through His human nature did He suffer; for when He came on

earth, His manhood became as truly and personally His, as His Almighty power had been from everlasting.

Think of this, all ye light-hearted, and consider whether with this thought you can read the last chapters of the four Gospels without fear and trembling.

For instance; "When He had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest Thou the high priest so?" The words must be said, though I hardly dare say them,—that officer lifted up his hand against God the Son. This is not a figurative way of speaking, or a rhetorical form of words, or a harsh, extreme, and unadvisable statement; it is a literal and simple truth, it is a great Catholic doctrine.

Again: "Then they did spit in His face, and buffeted Him, and others smote Him with the palms of their hands."

"The men that held Jesus mocked Him, and smote Him, and when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote Thee? and many other things blasphemously spake they against Him."

"And Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate."

"Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him; and the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand, and they put on Him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote Him on the head with a reed, and did

spit upon Him, and, bowing their knees, worshipped Him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe."

Lastly: "When they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him[1]"—between two malefactors, and even there they did not cease insulting and mocking Him; but all of them, chief priests and people, stood beholding, and bidding Him come down from the Cross.

Now I bid you consider that that Face, so ruthlessly smitten, was the Face of God Himself; the Brows bloody with the thorns, the sacred Body exposed to view and lacerated with the scourge, the Hands nailed to the Cross, and, afterwards, the Side pierced with the spear; it was the Blood, and the sacred Flesh, and the Hands, and the Temples, and the Side, and the Feet of God Himself, which the frenzied multitude then gazed upon. This is so fearful a thought, that when the mind first masters it, surely it will be difficult to think of any thing else; so that, while we think of it, we must pray God to temper it to us, and to give us strength to think of it rightly, lest it be too much for us.

Taking into account, then, that Almighty God Himself, God the Son, was the Sufferer, we shall understand better than we have hitherto the description given of Him by the Evangelists; we shall see the meaning of His general demeanour, His silence, and the words He used when He spoke, and Pilate's awe at Him.

"And the high priest arose and said unto Him,

[1] John xviii. 22. Matt. xxvi. 67. Luke xxii. 63—65; xxiii. 11. John xix. 1, 2. Matt. xxvii. 29. Mark xv. 19. Luke xxiii. 33.

Answerest Thou nothing? What is it which these witness against Thee? But Jesus held His peace[1]."

"When He was accused of the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto Him, Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee? and He answered him to never a word, insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly[2]."

"The Jews answered Him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer[3]."

"And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned with Him in many words, but He answered him nothing[4]."

Lastly, His words to the women who followed Him, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us[5]."

After these passages, consider the words of the beloved disciple, in anticipation of His coming at the end of the

[1] Matt. xxvi. 62, 63. [2] Matt. xxvii. 12—14. [3] John xix. 7—9.
[4] Luke xxiii. 8, 9. [5] Luke xxiii. 28—30.

world. "Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, they also which pierced Him: and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen[1]."

Yes, we shall all of us, for weal or for woe, one day see that holy Countenance which wicked men struck and dishonoured; we shall see those Hands that were nailed to the cross; that Side which was pierced. We shall see all this; and it will be the sight of the Living God.

This being the great mystery of Christ's Cross and Passion, we might with reason suppose, as I have said, that some great thing would result from it. The sufferings and death of the Word Incarnate could not pass away like a dream; they could not be a mere martyrdom, or a mere display or figure of something else, they must have a virtue in them. This we might be sure of, though nothing had been told us about the result. But that result is also revealed: it is this—our reconciliation to God, the expiation of our sins, and our new creation in holiness.

We had need of a reconciliation, for by nature we are outcasts. From the time that Adam fell, all his children have been under a curse. "In Adam all die[2]," as St. Paul says. So that every one of us is born into this world in a state of *death;* such is our natural life from our very first breath; we are children of wrath; conceived in sin; shapen in iniquity. We are under the bondage of an inborn element of evil, which thwarts

[1] Rev. i. 7. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

and stifles whatever principles remain of truth and goodness in us, directly we attempt to act according to them. This is that "body of death" under which St. Paul describes the natural man as groaning, and saying, "O wretched man, who shall deliver me?" Now for ourselves, my brethren, we know (praised be God) that all of us have from our infancy been taken out of this miserable heathen state by holy baptism, which is God's appointed means of regeneration. Still it is not less our natural state; it is the state in which every one of us was born; it is the state in which every little child is, when brought to the font. Dear as he is to those who bring him thither, and innocent as he may look, there is, till he is baptized, an evil spirit in his heart, a spirit of evil lying hid, seen of God, unseen by man (as the serpent among the trees of Eden), an evil spirit which from the first is hateful to God, and at length will be his eternal ruin. That evil spirit is cast out by Holy Baptism, without the privilege of which his birth would but be a misery to him. But whence did Baptism gain its power? From that great event we are so soon to commemorate; the death of the Son of God incarnate. Almost all religions have their outward cleansings; they feel the need of man, though they cannot supply it. Even the Jewish system, though Divine, effected nothing here; its washings were but carnal; the blood of bulls and goats was but earthly and unprofitable. Even St. John's baptism, our Lord's forerunner, had no inward propitiatory power. Christ was not yet crucified. But when that long-expected season came, when the Son of God had solemnly set Himself apart as a

Victim in the presence of His twelve Apostles, and had gone into the garden, and before three of them had undergone His agony and bloody sweat, and then had been betrayed, buffeted, spit upon, scourged, and nailed to the cross, till He died, then He with His last breath said, "It is finished;" and from that time the virtue of the Highest went forth through His wounds and with His blood, for the pardon and regeneration of man; and hence it is that baptism has its power.

This is why He "humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "Christ hath redeemed us," says the Apostle elsewhere, "from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us." Again, he says that Christ has "made peace by the blood of His cross." He has "reconciled" us "in the body of His flesh through death, to present us holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in His sight." Or, as St. John says, the saints "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." And no one speaks more explicitly on this great mystery than the prophet Isaiah, many hundred years before it was accomplished. "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all[1]."

[1] Gal. iii. 13. Col. i. 20—22. Rev. vii. 14. Isa. liii. 4—6.

We believe, then, that when Christ suffered on the cross, our nature suffered in Him. Human nature, fallen and corrupt, was under the wrath of God, and it was impossible that it should be restored to His favour till it had expiated its sin by suffering. Why this was necessary, we know not; but we are told expressly, that we are "all by nature children of wrath," that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified," and that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God." The Son of God then took our nature on Him, that in Him it might do and suffer what in itself was impossible to it. What it could not effect of itself, it could effect in Him. He carried it about Him through a life of penance. He carried it forward to agony and death. In Him our sinful nature died and rose again. When it died in Him on the cross, that death was its new creation. In Him it satisfied its old and heavy debt; for the presence of His Divinity gave it transcendent merit. His presence had kept it pure from sin from the first. His Hand had carefully selected the choicest specimen of our nature from the Virgin's substance; and, separating from it all defilement, His personal indwelling hallowed it and gave it power. And thus, when it had been offered up upon the Cross, and was made perfect by suffering, it became the first-fruits of a new man; it became a Divine leaven of holiness for the new birth and spiritual life of as many as should receive it. And thus, as the Apostle says, "If one died for all, then did *all* die;" "our old man is crucified *in Him*, that the *body* of sin might be destroyed;" and

"together" with Christ "when we were dead in sins, hath He quickened us, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Thus "we are members of His body, from His flesh, and from His bones: for whosoever eateth His flesh and drinketh His blood, hath eternal life," for His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed; and "he that eateth His flesh and drinketh His blood dwelleth in Him, and He in him[1]."

What a very different view of life do these doctrines present to us from that which the world takes. Only think of this one thing—of the eagerness of the great mass of men after matters of time, after engagements of this world, after gain, after national aggrandizement, after speculations which promise public or private advantage; and having thought of this, turn back to the contemplation of Christ's Cross, and then say, as candid men, whether the world, and all that is in the world, is not as unbelieving now as when Christ came. Does there not seem too great cause to fear that this nation, in spite of its having been baptized into the Cross of Christ, is in so unholy a state, that, did Christ come among us as He came among the Jews, we should, except a small remnant, reject Him as well as they? May we not be sure that men now-a-days, had they been alive when He came, would have disbelieved and derided the holy and mysterious doctrines which He brought? Alas! is there any doubt at all, that they would have fulfilled St. John's words,—"the darkness comprehended

[1] 2 Cor. v. 14. Rom. vi. 6. Eph. ii. 5, 6; v. 30. John vi. 54.

it not?" Their hearts are set on schemes of this world: there would have been no *sympathy* between them and the calm and heavenly mind of the Lord Jesus Christ. They would have said that His Gospel was strange, extravagant, incredible. The only reason they do not say so now is, that they are used to it, and do not really dwell on what they profess to believe. What! (it would have been said,) the Son of God taking human flesh, impossible! the Son of God, separate from God yet one with Him! "how can these things be?" God Himself suffering on the Cross, the Almighty Everlasting God in the form of a servant, with human flesh and blood, wounded, insulted, dying? and all this as an Expiation for human sin? Why (they would ask) was an Expiation necessary? why could not the All-merciful Father pardon without one? why is human sin to be accounted so great an evil? We see no necessity for so marvellous a remedy; we refuse to admit a course of doctrine so utterly unlike any thing which the face of this world tells us of. These are events without parallels; they belong to a new and distinct order of things; and, while our heart has no sympathy with them, our reason utterly rejects them.—And as for Christ's miracles, if they had not seen them, they would not have believed the report; if they had, they would have been ready enough to refer them to juggling craft,—if not, as the Jews did, to Beelzebub.

Such will the holy truths of the Gospel ever appear to those who live to this world, whether they love its pleasures, its comforts, its prizes, or its struggles; their eyes are waxen gross, they cannot see Christ spiritually.

When they see Him, there is no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. Thus they become unbelieving. In our Lord's words, "No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. *Ye cannot serve God and mammon*[1]." When He said this, the Pharisees *derided Him.* And He said unto them, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." God grant that we may not be of those who "justify themselves before men," and "deride" those who preach the severe doctrine of the Cross! God grant that, if we have any misgivings about the corruptions and defects of the religion now so popular among us, we may have the grace forthwith to desire honestly to know God's will! God grant that we may not attempt to deceive our consciences, and to reconcile together, by some artifice or other, the service of this world and of God! God grant that we may not pervert and dilute His holy Word, put upon it the false interpretations of men, reason ourselves out of its strictness, and reduce religion to an ordinary common-place matter—instead of thinking it what it *is*, a mysterious and supernatural subject, as distinct from any thing that lies on the surface of this world, as day is from night and heaven from earth!

[1] Luke xvi. 13—15.

# SERMON VII.

## THE CROSS OF CHRIST THE MEASURE OF THE WORLD.

(SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT.)

JOHN xii. 32.

*"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."*

A GREAT number of men live and die without reflecting at all upon the state of things in which they find themselves. They take things as they come, and follow their inclinations as far as they have the opportunity. They are guided mainly by pleasure and pain, not by reason, principle, or conscience; and they do not attempt to *interpret* this world, to determine what it means, or to reduce what they see and feel to system. But when persons, either from thoughtfulness of mind, or from intellectual activity, begin to contemplate the visible state of things into which they are born, then forthwith they find it a maze and a perplexity. It is a riddle which they cannot solve. It seems full of contradictions and without a drift. Why it is, and what it is to issue in, and how it is what it is, and how we come to be introduced into it, and what is our destiny, are all mysteries.

In this difficulty, some have formed one philosophy of life, and others another. Men have thought they had found the key, by means of which they might read what is so obscure. Ten thousand things come before us one after another in the course of life, and what are we to think of them? what colour are we to give them? Are we to look at all things in a gay and mirthful way? or in a melancholy way? in a desponding or a hopeful way? Are we to make light of life altogether, or to treat the whole subject seriously? Are we to make greatest things of little consequence, or least things of great consequence? Are we to keep in mind what is past and gone, or are we look on to the future, or are we to be absorbed in what is present? *How* are we to look at things? this is the question which all persons of observation ask themselves, and answer each in his own way. They wish to think by rule; by something within them, which may harmonise and adjust what is without them. Such is the need felt by reflective minds. Now, let me ask, what *is* the real key, what is the Christian interpretation of this world? What is given us by revelation to estimate and measure this world by? The event of this season,—the Crucifixion of the Son of God.

It is the death of the Eternal Word of God made flesh, which is our great lesson how to think and how to speak of this world. His Cross has put its due value upon every thing which we see, upon all fortunes, all advantages, all ranks, all dignities, all pleasures; upon the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It has set a price upon the excitements, the rivalries, the hopes, the fears, the desires, the efforts, the

triumphs of mortal man. It has given a meaning to the various, shifting course, the trials, the temptations, the sufferings, of his earthly state. It has brought together and made consistent all that seemed discordant and aimless. It has taught us how to live, how to use this world, what to expect, what to desire, what to hope. It is the tone into which all the strains of this world's music are ultimately to be resolved.

Look around, and see what the world presents of high and low. Go to the court of princes. See the treasure and skill of all nations brought together to honour a child of man. Observe the prostration of the many before the few. Consider the form and ceremonial, the pomp, the state, the circumstance; and the vain-glory. Do you wish to know the worth of it all? look at the Cross of Christ.

Go to the political world: see nation jealous of nation, trade rivalling trade, armies and fleets matched against each other. Survey the various ranks of the community, its parties and their contests, the strivings of the ambitious, the intrigues of the crafty. What is the end of all this turmoil? the grave. What is the measure? the Cross.

Go, again, to the world of intellect and science: consider the wonderful discoveries which the human mind is making, the variety of arts to which its discoveries give rise, the all but miracles by which it shows its power; and next, the pride and confidence of reason, and the absorbing devotion of thought to transitory objects, which is the consequence. Would you form a right judgment of all this? look at the Cross.

Again: look at misery, look at poverty and destitution, look at oppression and captivity; go where food is scanty, and lodging unhealthy. Consider pain and suffering, diseases long or violent; all that is frightful and revolting. Would you know how to rate all these? gaze upon the Cross.

Thus in the Cross, and Him who hung upon it, all things meet; all things subserve it, all things need it. It is their centre and their interpretation. For He was lifted up upon it, that He might draw all men and all things unto Him.

But it will be said, that the view which the Cross of Christ imparts to us of human life and of the world, is not that which we should take, if left to ourselves; that it is not an obvious view; that if we look at things on their surface, they are far more bright and sunny than they appear when viewed in the light which this season casts upon them. The world seems made for the enjoyment of just such a being as man, and man is put into it. He has the *capacity* of enjoyment, and the world supplies the *means*. How natural this, what a simple as well as pleasant philosophy, yet how different from that of the Cross! The doctrine of the Cross, it may be said, disarranges two parts of a system which seem made for each other; it severs the fruit from the eater, the enjoyment from the enjoyer. How does this solve a problem? does it not rather itself create one?

I answer, first, that whatever force this objection may have, surely it is merely a repetition of that which Eve felt and Satan urged in Eden; for did not the woman see that the forbidden tree was "good for food," and "a tree

to be *desired?*" Well, then, is it wonderful that we too, the descendants of the first pair, should still be in a world where there is a forbidden fruit, and that our trials should lie in being within reach of it, and our happiness in abstaining from it? The world, at first sight, appears *made* for pleasure, and the vision of Christ's Cross is a solemn and sorrowful sight interfering with this appearance. Be it so; but why may it not be our duty to abstain from enjoyment notwithstanding, if it was a duty even in Eden?

But again; it is but a superficial view of things to say that this life is made for pleasure and happiness. To those who look under the surface, it tells a very different tale. The doctrine of the Cross does but teach, though infinitely more forcibly, still after all it does but teach the very same lesson which this world teaches to those who live long in it, who have much experience in it, who know it. The world is sweet to the lips, but bitter to the taste. It pleases at first, but not at last. It looks gay on the outside, but evil and misery lie concealed within. When a man has passed a certain number of years in it, he cries out with the Preacher, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Nay, if he has not religion for his guide, he will be forced to go further, and say, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit;" all is disappointment; all is sorrow; all is pain. The sore judgments of God upon sin are concealed within it, and force a man to grieve whether he will or no. Therefore the doctrine of the Cross of Christ does but anticipate for us our experience of the world. It is true, it bids us grieve for our sins in the midst of all that smiles and

glitters around us; but if we will not heed it, we shall at length be forced to grieve for them from undergoing their fearful punishment. If we will not acknowledge that this world has been made miserable by sin, from the sight of Him on whom our sins were laid, we shall experience it to be miserable by the recoil of those sins upon ourselves.

It may be granted, then, that the doctrine of the Cross is not on the surface of the world. The surface of things is bright only, and the Cross is sorrowful; it is a hidden doctrine; it lies under a veil; it at first sight startles us, and we are tempted to revolt from it. Like St. Peter, we cry out, "Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee[1]." And yet it is a true doctrine; for truth is not on the surface of things, but in the depths.

And as the doctrine of the Cross, though it be the true interpretation of this world, is not prominently manifested in it, upon its surface, but is concealed; so again, when received into the faithful heart, there it abides as a living principle, but deep, and hidden from observation. Religious men, in the words of Scripture, "live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved them and gave Himself for them[2]:" but they do not tell this to all men; they leave others to find it out as they may. Our Lord's own command to His disciples was, that when they fast, they should "anoint their head and wash their face[3]." Thus they are bound not to make a display, but ever to be content to look outwardly differ-

[1] Matt. xvi. 22. [2] Gal. ii. 20. [3] Matt. vi. 17.

ent from what they are really inwardly. They are to carry a cheerful countenance with them, and to control and regulate their feelings, that those feelings, by not being expended on the surface, may retire deep into their hearts and there live. And thus "Jesus Christ and He crucified" is, as the Apostle tells us, "a hidden wisdom;" —hidden in the world, which seems at first sight to speak a far other doctrine,—and hidden in the faithful soul, which to persons at a distance, or to chance beholders, seems to be living but an ordinary life, while really it is in secret holding communion with Him who was "manifested in the flesh," "crucified through weakness," "justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, and received up into glory."

This being the case, the great and awful doctrine of the Cross of Christ, which we now commemorate, may fitly be called, in the language of figure, the *heart* of religion. The heart may be considered as the seat of life; it is the principle of motion, heat, and activity; from it the blood goes to and fro to the extreme parts of the body. It sustains the man in his powers and faculties; it enables the brain to think; and when it is touched, man dies. And in like manner the sacred doctrine of Christ's Atoning Sacrifice is the vital principle on which the Christian lives, and without which Christianity is not. Without it no other doctrine is held profitably; to believe in Christ's Divinity, or in His manhood, or in the Holy Trinity, or in a judgment to come, or in the resurrection of the dead, is an untrue belief, not Christian faith, unless we receive also the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice. On the other hand, to re-

ceive it presupposes the reception of other high truths of the Gospel besides; it involves the belief in Christ's true divinity, in His true incarnation, and in man's sinful state by nature; and it prepares the way to belief in the sacred Eucharistic feast, in which He who was once crucified is ever given to our souls and bodies, verily and indeed, in His Body and in His Blood. But again, the heart is hidden from view; it is carefully and securely guarded; it is not like the eye set in the forehead, commanding all, and seen of all: and so in like manner the sacred doctrine of the Atoning Sacrifice is not one to be talked of, but to be lived upon; not to be put forth irreverently, but to be adored secretly; not to be used as a necessary instrument in the conversion of the ungodly, or for the satisfaction of reasoners of this world, but to be unfolded to the docile and obedient; to young children, whom the world has not corrupted; to the sorrowful, who need comfort; to the sincere and earnest, who need a rule of life; to the innocent, who need warning; and to the established, who have earned the knowledge of it.

One more remark I shall make, and then conclude. It must not be supposed, because the doctrine of the Cross makes us sad, that therefore the Gospel is a sad religion. The Psalmist says, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy;" and our Lord says, "They that mourn shall be comforted." Let no one go away with the impression that the Gospel makes us take a gloomy view of the world and of life. It hinders us indeed from taking a superficial view, and finding a vain transitory joy in what we see; but it forbids our immediate

enjoyment, only to grant enjoyment in truth and fulness afterwards. It only forbids us to *begin* with enjoyment. It only says, If you begin with pleasure, you will end with pain. It bids us begin with the Cross of Christ, and in that Cross we shall at first find sorrow, but in a while peace and comfort will rise out of that sorrow. That Cross will lead us to mourning, repentance, humiliation, prayer, fasting; we shall sorrow for our sins, we shall sorrow with Christ's sufferings; but all this sorrow will only issue, nay, will be undergone in a happiness far greater than the enjoyment which the world gives, —though careless worldly minds indeed will not believe this, ridicule the notion of it, because they never have tasted it, and consider it a mere matter of words, which religious persons think it decent and proper to use, and try to believe themselves, and to get others to believe, but which no one really feels. This is what they think; but our Saviour said to His disciples, "Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." ... "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." And St. Paul says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him[1]." And thus the Cross of Christ, as telling us of our redemption

[1] John xvi. 22; xiv. 27. 1 Cor. ii. 9. 14.

as well as of His sufferings, wounds us indeed, but so wounds as to heal also.

And thus, too, all that is bright and beautiful, even on the surface of this world, though it has no substance, and may not suitably be enjoyed for its own sake, yet is a figure and promise of that true joy which issues out of the Atonement. It is a promise beforehand of what is to be: it is a shadow, raising hope because the substance is to follow, but not to be rashly taken instead of the substance. And it is God's usual mode of dealing with us, in mercy to send the shadow before the substance, that we may take comfort in what is to be, before it comes. Thus our Lord before His Passion rode into Jerusalem in triumph, with the multitudes crying Hosanna, and strewing His road with palm branches and their garments. This was but a vain and hollow pageant, nor did our Lord take pleasure in it. It was a shadow which stayed not, but flitted away: It could not be more than a shadow, for the Passion had not been undergone by which His true triumph was wrought out. He could not enter into His glory before He had first suffered. He could not take pleasure in this semblance of it, knowing that it was unreal. Yet that first shadowy triumph was the omen and presage of the true victory to come, when He had overcome the sharpness of death. And we commemorate this figurative triumph on the last Sunday in Lent, to cheer us in the sorrow of the week that follows, and to remind us of the true joy which comes with Easter-Day.

And so, too, as regards this world, with all its enjoyments, yet disappointments. Let us not trust it; let

us not give our hearts to it; let us not begin with it. Let us begin with faith; let us begin with Christ; let us begin with His Cross and the humiliation to which it leads. Let us first be drawn to Him who is lifted up, that so He may, with Himself, freely give us all things. Let us "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," and then all those things of this world "will be added to us." They alone are able truly to enjoy this world, who begin with the world unseen. They alone enjoy it, who have first abstained from it. They alone can truly feast, who have first fasted; they alone are able to use the world, who have learned not to abuse it; they alone inherit it, who take it as a shadow of the world to come, and who for that world to come relinquish it.

# SERMON VIII.

## DIFFICULTY OF REALIZING SACRED PRIVILEGES.

(EASTER.)

PSALM cxviii. 24.

*"This is the Day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."*

IT is always very difficult to realize any great joy or great sorrow. We cannot realize it by wishing to do so. What brings joys and sorrows of this world home to us, is their circumstances and accompaniments. When a friend dies, we cannot believe him taken from us at first;—we cannot believe ourselves to be in any new place when we are just come to it. When we are told a thing, we assent to it, we do not doubt it, but we do not feel it to be true, we do not understand it as a fact which must take up a position or station in our thoughts, and must be acted from and acted towards, must be dealt with *as* existing: that is, we do not realize it. This seems partly the reason why, when Almighty God reveals Himself in Scripture to this man or that, he, on the other hand, asks for some sign whereby he shall know that God has spoken. Doubtless sinful infirmity sometimes mixed itself up in such questions,

as in the case of Zacharias, who being a Priest in the Temple, the very dwelling-place of the Living God, where, if any where, Angels were present, where, if any where, God would speak, ought to have needed nothing whereby to realize to himself God's power, God's super-intending eye, God's faithfulness towards the house of Israel and its priests. Under the same feeling, though blamelessly, Gideon asked for the miracle upon the fleece. He could not bring himself to believe that *he* was to be what God's Angel had declared. What? *he*, the least of his father's house, and his family poor in Manasseh, how could he understand that *he* was to be the greatest champion of Israel against the Midianites? Not that he doubted it, for God had said it; but he could not feel, think, speak, act as if it were true. If he attempted to do so, it was in an unreal way, and he spoke and acted unnaturally and on a theory, on a view of things which he had mastered one minute and which was gone the next. The special favour of God towards him, according to the words, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour[1]!" seemed like a dream, and confused him. So he said "If now so it be, certain consequences flow from it; if God is with me, it is the God of miracles who is with me, who can change the creature as He will; may He then vouchsafe to do so! that I may have the full impression on my soul, heart, and mind, of what my reason receives; that I may be familiarized to this strange and overpowering Providence, that *I* should be raised above my brethren, and made God's minister to them for good." And therefore he

[1] Judges vi. 12.

asked, first, that the fleece might be wet, then that it might be dry; not as evidence whereon to build his faith, but as a manifestation impressing his imagination and heart.

In somewhat the same way we are told of Jacob also; "when he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived[1]." Jacob, to be sure, did doubt what his sons reported, from distrust of them; yet the mere sight of the waggons did not serve to prove their veracity nearly so much, as to quiet his perplexed imagination, and to reconcile it to the sudden news. That news was more startling, than the reporters were untrustworthy.

And thus we Christians, though born in our very infancy into the kingdom of God, and chosen above all other men to be heirs of heaven and witnesses to the world, and though knowing and believing this truth entirely, yet have very great difficulty and pass many years in learning our privilege. Not any one, of course, fully understands it;—doubtless; but we have not even a fair, practical hold of it. And here we are, even on this great Day, this Day of days, on which Christ arose from the dead,—here are we, on this very Day as infants, lying helpless and senseless on the ground, without eyes to see or heart to comprehend who we are.

Surely so it is: and it cannot be denied that we have much to do, very much, before we rise to the understanding of our new nature and its privileges, and learn to rejoice and be glad in the Day which the Lord

[1] Gen. xlv. 27.

hath made; "the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places[1]." Such high words as these are, alas! scarcely more than mere words when spoken to us; at best, we but believe them; we do not in any good measure realize them.

Now this insensibility or want of apprehension rises in great measure, it is scarcely necessary to say, from our exceeding frailness and sinfulness. Our old nature is continually exerting itself against the new; "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit[2]." Its desire is towards this world. This world is its food; its eyes apprehend this world. Because it is what it is, it allies itself to this world. The world and the flesh form a compact with each other; the one asks, and the other supplies. Therefore, in proportion as it seduces us into the world's company, of course, in an equal degree, it blunts our perception of that world which we do not see; it prevents our realizing it. And thus one special cause of our difficulty in realizing our election into the kingdom of heaven is our evil nature, which familiarizes us with this world, Satan's kingdom, and weighs on us and pulls us down when we would lift up our hearts, lift them up unto the Lord. This is certain: yet, besides this, there are certainly other reasons too which make it

[1] Eph. i. 18—20. [2] Gal. v. 17.

difficult for us to apprehend our state, and cause us to do so but gradually; and which are not our fault, but which arises out of our position and circumstances.

We are born almost into the fulness of Christian blessings, long before we have reason. We could not apprehend them at all, and that without our own fault, when we were baptized; for we were infants. As, then, we acquire reason itself but gradually, so we acquire the knowledge of what we are but gradually also; and as it is no fault in us, but a blessing to us, that we were baptized so early, so, from the nature of the case, and not from any fault of ours, do we but slowly enter into the privileges of our baptism. So it is as regards all our knowledge of ourselves and of our position in the world; we but gradually gain it. At first children do not know that they are responsible beings; but by degrees they not only feel that they are, but reflect on the great truth, and on what it implies. Some persons recollect a time as children when it fell on them to reflect what they were, whence they came, whither they tended, why they lived, what was required of them. The thought fell upon them long after they had heard and spoken of God; but at length they began to realize what they had heard, and they began to muse about themselves. So, too, it is in matters of this world. As our minds open, we gradually understand where we are in human society. We have a notion of ranks and classes, of nations, of countries. We begin to see how we stand relatively to others. Thus a man differs from a boy; he has a general view of things; he sees their bearings on each other; he sees his own

position, sees what is becoming, what is expected of him, what his duty is in the community, what his rights. He understands his place in the world, and, in a word, he is at home in it.

Alas, that while we thus grow in knowledge in matters of time and sense, yet we remain children in knowledge of our heavenly privileges! St. Paul says, that whereas Christ is risen, He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus[1]." This is what we have still to learn; to know our place, position, situation as "children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." We are risen again, and we know it not. We begin our Catechism by confessing that we are risen, but it takes a long life to apprehend what we confess. We are like people waking from sleep, who cannot collect their thoughts at once, or understand where they are. By little and little the truth breaks upon us. Such are we in the present world; sons of light, gradually waking to a knowledge of themselves. For this let us meditate, let us pray, let us work,—gradually to attain to a real apprehension of what we are. Thus, as time goes on, we shall gain first one thing, then another. By little and little we shall give up shadows and find the substance. Waiting on God day by day, we shall make progress d.., by day, and approach to the true and clear view of what He has made us to be in Christ. Year by year we shall gain something, and each Easter, as it comes, will enable us more to rejoice

[1] Eph. ii. 6.

with heart and understanding in that great salvation which Christ then accomplished.

This we shall find to be one great providential benefit arising from those duties which He exacts of us. Our duties to God and man are not only duties done to Him, but they are means of enlightening our eyes and making our faith apprehensive. Every act of obedience has a tendency to strengthen our convictions about heaven. Every sacrifice makes us more zealous; every self-denial makes us more devoted. This is a use, too, of the observance of sacred seasons; they wean us from this world, they impress upon us the reality of the world which we see not. We trust, if we thus proceed, we shall understand more and more where we are. We humbly trust that, as we cleanse ourselves from this world, our eyes will be enlightened to see the things which are only spiritually discerned. We hope that to us will be fulfilled in due measure the words of the beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God[1]." We have good hope, which cannot deceive us, that if we wait upon God, as the Saints have ever waited, with fastings and prayers,—if we seek Him as Anna sought Him, or St. Peter at Joppa, or holy Daniel before them, Christ will be manifested to us; the day will dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts. We shall see the sign of the Son of man in heaven; we shall eat of the hidden manna, and possess that secret of the Lord which is with those that fear Him; and, like St. Paul, we shall "know whom we have believed, and be persuaded that He is able to keep that

[1] Matt. v. 8.

which we have committed unto Him against that day[1]."

While then we feel keenly, as we ought, that we do not honour this Blessed Day with that lively and earnest joy which is its due, yet let us not be discouraged, let us not despond at this. We *do* feel joy; we feel more joy than we know we do. We see more of the next world than we know we see. If we have duly improved the sacred season which is now past; if we have in good earnest, and without trifling with ourselves, denied ourselves in meat and drink, and other indulgences, according to our strength; if we have been frequent in prayers according to our opportunities; it cannot be but that a blessing has come upon us, and is upon us now. We may not be sensible of it, but by and by we shall know it, when we look back upon it. What has already happened in our past experience surely is enough to assure us of this. We know in what way we have been hitherto brought to recognize so much as we do recognize of our Christian blessedness; how very gradually, how silently. We may recollect, perhaps, one or other striking occurrence. Perhaps, as I have said, we can put our hand, as it were, on a time in our childhood, when the thought first came on us that we had relations towards other beings, and they towards us, and we marvelled what we were, and why we existed. Perhaps, in after life, we recollect seasons when the force of Divine truth came on us more sensibly and distinctly; but for the most part it is not so. For the most part we have gained truth, and made progress

[1] 2 Tim. i. 12.

from truth to truth, without knowing it. We cannot tell when we first held this, or first held that doctrine, which is now our joy and treasure. It is "as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how . . . first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear[1]." One may see this on all sides; one may see it especially at this time. God Almighty seems at this time to be mercifully leading numbers on to the full truth, as it is in Jesus (if it be not presumptuous thus to speak); He is leading them on, and they do not know it themselves. They are gradually modifying and changing their opinions, while they think they remain stationary. Others, perhaps, see how it is with them: they do not; in due time they will. Such is God's wonderful way. Jacob was at Bethel before he knew it. We, too, are in the kingdom of grace without knowing it, and it is manifested in us before we are sensible of the manifestation. As infants gaze around them, and yet seem to look at nothing, we too see our privileges, yet do not master them. Let us pray ever, that we may know more and more what we are, and that we may duly apprehend our own knowledge; in a word, that we may have right feelings, and a corresponding creed.

And now, to conclude, for it is hardly befitting on this Day to speak much, when God has done His greatest work. Let us think of it and of Him. Let us rejoice in the Day which He has made, and let us be "willing in the Day of His Power." This is Easter

[1] Mark iv. 26—28.

Day. Let us say this again and again to ourselves with fear and great joy. As children say to themselves, "This is the spring," or "This is the sea," trying to grasp the thought, and not let it go; as travellers in a foreign land say, "This is that great city," or "This is that famous building," knowing it has a long history through centuries, and vexed with themselves that they know so little about it; so let us say, This is the Day of Days, the Royal Day, the Lord's Day. This is the Day on which Christ arose from the dead; the Day which brought us salvation. It is a Day which has made us greater than we know. It is our Day of rest, the true Sabbath. Christ entered into His rest, and so do we. It brings us, in figure, through the grave and gate of death to our season of refreshment in Abraham's bosom. We have had enough of weariness, and dreariness, and listlessness, and sorrow, and remorse. We have had enough of this troublesome world. We have had enough of its noise and din. Noise is its best music. But now there is stillness; and it is a stillness that speaks. We know how strange the feeling is of perfect silence after continued sound. Such is our blessedness now. Calm and serene days have begun; and Christ is heard in them, and His still small voice, because the world speaks not. Let us only put off the world, and we put on Christ. The receding from one is an approach to the other. We have now for some weeks been trying, through His grace, to unclothe ourselves of earthly wants and desires. May that unclothing be unto us a clothing upon of things invisible and imperishable! May we grow in grace, and in the

knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, season after season, year after year, till He takes to Himself, first one, then another, in the order He thinks fit, to be separated from each other for a little while, to be united together for ever, in the kingdom of His Father and our Father, His God and our God.

# SERMON. IX.

## THE GOSPEL SIGN ADDRESSED TO FAITH.

(EASTER.)

MATT. xii. 38.

*"Then certain of the Scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a Sign from Thee."*

THESE Scribes and Pharisees, though Christ had wrought among them "works which none other man did," and, as one of their own company confessed, no man could do miracles such as His "except God were with him," persisted in asking for some decisive Sign, which would prove His Divinity beyond all question. In His reply, our Lord denied and yet promised such a sign. He says, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; there shall no sign be given to it, but the Sign of the Prophet Jonas." In this sentence it is implied, both that their wishes were not to be granted, yet that a great miracle was to be wrought.

On a second occasion they asked again, Sadducees as well as Pharisees: they "came, and tempting, desired Him that He would show them a sign from heaven." Joshua had stopped the sun and moon "in the sight of

Israel;" Samuel had brought thunder at harvest time; they asked for a similar miracle. They asked for a sign from heaven; He answered still by promising a Sign from the earth,—a Sign like his, who was "three days and three nights in the whale's belly." A Sign was to be wrought and was to disappoint them: it was to be a Sign, but not to them; hence our Lord says in the parallel passage in St. Mark, "Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given to this generation[1]."

In an earlier part of His ministry, the same question had been asked, and the same answer given under a different image. The Jews "said unto Him, What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?" He in like manner answers; "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up[2]." They misunderstood Him, and He did not set them right. For they were to see, and see not; they were not to witness the Sign then, nor were they allowed to apprehend His language now. He spoke of the resurrection of His body, and they were not at that season to see Him whom they had pierced.

Now what is remarkable in this passage is this, that our Lord promised a great sign parallel to those wrought by the old prophets; yet instead of being public as theirs was, it was in the event, like Jonah's, a secret sign. Few saw it; it was to be received by all, but on faith; it was addressed to the humble and lowly. When it took place, and St. Thomas refused to believe without sight, our Lord said to him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they

[1] Matt. xvi. 1. Mark viii. 12. [2] John ii. 19.

that have not seen, and yet have believed." The Apostle, perhaps, might have been arguing, "If this be the Lord's great Sign, surely it is to be seen. What is meant by the resurrection but an evidence which is to be addressed to my senses? I have to believe, and this is to assure my belief." Yet St. Thomas would have been more blessed, had he believed Christ's miraculous Presence without seeing it; and our Lord implied that such persons there would be.

Now what makes this a subject of interest to us is, that our Lord does expressly promise all Christians a certain gracious manifestation of Himself, which it is natural, at first sight, to suppose a sensible one: and many persons understand it to be such, as if it were not more blessed to believe than to see. Our Lord says; "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." When Jude asked Him, "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" our Lord answered, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him[1]." In accordance with this promise, St. Paul says, "The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God;" and St. John, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

Now, that this great gift, whatever it be, is of a nature to impart illumination, sanctity, and peace, to

[1] John xiv. 21—23.

the soul to which it comes, far from disputing, I would earnestly maintain. And, in this indirect way, doubtless, it is in a certain sense apprehended and perceived; perceived in its effects, with a consciousness that those effects cannot come of themselves, but imply a gift from which they come, and a presence of which they are, as it were, the shadow, a voice of which they are the echo. But there are persons who desire the inward manifestation of Christ to be much more sensible than this. They will not be contented without some sensible sign and direct evidence that God loves them; some assurance, in which faith has no part, that God has chosen them; and which may answer to their anticipations of what Scripture calls "the secret of the Lord," and "that hidden manna" which Christ invites us to partake. Some men, for instance, hold that their conscience would have no peace, unless they recollected the time when they were converted from darkness to light, from a state of wrath to the kingdom of God. Others consider, that in order to possess the seal of election, they must be able to discern in themselves certain feelings or frames of mind, a renunciation of their own merit, and an apprehension of gospel salvation; as if it were not enough to renounce ourselves and follow Christ, without the lively consciousness that we are doing so; and that in this lies "the secret of the Lord." Others go further; and think that without a distinct inward assurance of his salvation, a man is not in a saving state. This is what men often conceive; not considering that whatever be the manifestation promised to Christians by our Lord, it is not likely to be more sensible and more intelligible than the

great sign of His own Resurrection. Yet even that, like the miracle wrought upon Jonah, was in secret, and they who believed without seeing it were more blessed than those who saw.

All this accords with what is told us about particular Divine manifestations in other parts of Scripture. The Saints reflected on them afterwards, and mastered them, but can hardly be considered as sensible of them at the very time. Thus Jacob, after the vision, says; "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." Manoah said to his wife, after the Angel had departed, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." Gideon in like circumstances said, "Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an Angel of the Lord face to face." And St. Peter, while the Angel was delivering him out of prison, though he obeyed him, yet "wist not that it was true which was done by the Angel, but thought he saw a vision;" but "when he was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent His Angel[1]."

Let no one think it strange to say, that God may be holding communion with us without our knowing it. Do not all good thoughts come from Him? Yet are we sensible that they so come? Can we tell how they come? We commonly speak of being influenced by God's grace, and resisting His grace; this implies a certain awful intercourse between the soul and God; yet who will say that he himself can tell in particular instances when God moves him, and when he is responding this way or

[1] Gen. xxviii. 16. Judg. xiii. 22; vi. 22. Acts xii. 9. 11.

that? It is one thing, then, to receive impressions, another to reflect upon them and to be conscious of them. God may manifest Himself to us, and that to the increase of our comfort, and yet we not realize that He does so.

But now to proceed; for there is more information given us on the subject. There was another occasion on which the Jews asked for a sign, and on which our Lord answered by promising one, not to His Apostles only, but in continuance, like the manifestation He speaks of, to all His faithful followers. And it was a sign not more sensible or palpable, not less the object of faith as regards the many, than that sign of His resurrection which He gave once for all. He had just before been feeding five thousand men with five barley loaves and two small fishes; when, not contented with this, the Jews said, "What sign showest Thou, that we may see and believe Thee? What dost Thou *work?*" and they proceeded to refer to the "sign from heaven," which Moses had given them. "Our Fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." It was a little thing, they seemed to say, to multiply bread, but it was a great thing to send down bread from heaven,—a great thing, when the nature of the creature was changed, and men were made to live by the word of the Lord. Was the Son of man able to give them bread such as this? Yes, surely, He had a Sign,—a Sign from heaven, more wonderful, a fearful Sign, surpassing thought and surpassing sight too, addressed to faith only, but not the less true because it was hidden. Moses gave their

fathers bread from heaven; they saw it, ate it, and were dead; His sign was greater. He was Himself the Bread from heaven under the Gospel, and the Bread of life. He took not of the creature to satisfy their need, but He gave Himself for the life of the world, "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the True Bread from heaven, for the Bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. I am the Bread of Life. This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." Now I am not led to speak here of that special ordinance in which His Divine announcement is fulfilled; this would be foreign to my present purpose. I do but wish to consider the gift in itself, and the sign in itself, as these words describe it. It is a sign greater than manna, yet beyond dispute, as the passage itself shows, a sign not addressed to sight, but to faith. For our Lord speaks of our "coming to Him," and "believing on Him;" and He says that "it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing;" and He warns us, "No one can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." His coming up from the heart of the earth was a sign for faith, not for sight; and such is His coming down from heaven as Bread.

I have been speaking of the signs which He Himself promised; but others were announced concerning Him by His servants, and these, let it be observed, are secret also, and addressed to faith. The Prophet Isaiah was commissioned to promise Ahaz a sign; "Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God," he says, "ask it either in

the depth or in the height above." When Ahaz would not speak, the Prophet proceeded: "The Lord Himself shall give you a Sign; behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel[1]." Yet could there be a Sign more secret, less exposed to the senses, less addressed to the reason, than the Conception of Christ? It was a miracle, yet not an evidence.

And so again, when our Lord was born, the Angel gave the Shepherds a Sign; but which was the greater evidence, the Angel himself, and the multitude of the heavenly host, or the Sign itself which he sent them to see? "This shall be a Sign unto you," he said, "Ye shall see the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Was this an evidence of greatness or of meanness? Did it prove Him to be God, or was it a trial of faith?

And so again, though it is not called a sign, yet it had been published in the manner of a sign, that the Lord should suddenly come to His Temple, even the "Messenger of the Covenant," that "the glory of the latter house should be greater than that of the former," and that God would "glorify the house of His glory." But how did He come to fulfil these prophecies? As an infant in arms, recognized by one or two holy persons, and that by means of faith, without pomp, or display of greatness. Simeon held in his hands the immaculate form of the Saviour of men, the Light and Life of the world, the all-holy and incorruptible Presence which the Angels of God worship; yet in what an outward

[1] Isa. vii. 11. 14.

appearance! Yet still he said undoubtingly, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

What is true in these instances, is true of all the parts of our Lord's gracious economy. He was "manifested in the flesh; justified in the Spirit; seen of Angels; preached unto the Gentiles; believed on in the world; received up into glory;" yet what was the nature of the manifestation? The Annunciation was secret; the Nativity was secret; the miraculous Fasting in the wilderness was secret; the Resurrection secret; the Ascension not far from secret; the abiding Presence secret. One thing alone was public, and in the eyes of the world,—His Death; the only event which did not speak of His Divinity, the only event in which He seemed a sign, not of power, but of weakness. He was crucified in weakness, but He was not crucified in secret. His humiliation was proclaimed and manifested all over the earth. When lifted up indeed from the earth, He displayed His power; He drew all men to Him, but not from what was seen, but from what was hidden, from what was not known, from what was matter of faith, from His atoning virtue. As far as seen, He was, in holy Simeon's words, "a Sign which should be spoken against." It is not by reason or by sight that we accept and glory in the sign of the Cross; it is by "laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings," and "as newborn babes desiring the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby." "If so be," as St. Peter proceeds, "ye have tasted that the Lord is

gracious; to whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Unto you, therefore, *that believe,* He is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the Stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner[1]."

Let us not seek then for signs and wonders, or ask for sensible inward tokens of God's favour; let us not indulge enthusiasm, or become the slaves of superstition, who are children of God by faith. Faith only can introduce us to the unseen Presence of God; let us venture to believe, let us make trial before we see, and the evidence which others demand before believing, we shall gain more abundantly by believing. Almighty God is hidden from us; the world does not discover Him to us; we may go to the right hand and the left, but we find Him not. The utmost we can do in the way of nature is to feel after Him, who, though we see Him not, yet is not far from every one of us. "Lo He goeth by me," says Job, "and I see Him not; He passeth on also, and I perceive Him not." "O that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat. . . . Behold, I go forward, and He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him. On the left hand where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him[2]." This is the veil that is cast

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 1–7.

[2] Job ix. 11; xxiii. 3. 8. 9.

over all nations; the want of intercourse or communion between the soul and Him who made it. We can speak to His creatures, we cannot speak to Him. Once it was not so; man was created upright, and then He saw God; he fell, and lost God's image and God's presence. How must he regain his privilege, but by becoming what he once was? He lost it by sinning, he must regain it by pureness. And till this recovery he must accept it on faith; he is allowed to apprehend and enjoy it by faith. He begins with faith, that he may end with holiness; he is allowed to begin with faith, because faith is itself of a holy nature, and the first fruits and earnest of holiness to come. Faith is the religion of sinners beginning to purify themselves for God, and in every age, and under every dispensation, the just have lived by faith. "By faith" Moses "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible;" for lack of faith Balaam met an Angel in the way and discerned him not. Thus "we walk by faith, not by sight;" we "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." We set Him on our right hand, "whom having not seen, we love: in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

Opposed to this generous and vigorous faith are carnal blindness and grossness of heart, of which Scripture speaks so often. Whatever there is of spiritual light within us, is quenched by indulging our natural tastes and appetites. Our Lord says, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon;" He bids us watch and pray, and

beware of eating and drinking, buying and selling, marrying and being given in marriage. We cannot have our eyes at once on this world and on the other. Those who live in the sun's glare, can see nothing in twilight; but those whose eyes are used to the shade, see many things which the others will not believe they can see. So is it with our souls; the minding of the flesh, aiming at this world's goods, seeking to rise or succeed in life, gazing on greatness, rank, distinction, abundance, pomp and show, coveting wealth, measuring things by wealth, eating and drinking without restraint, placing no curb upon the passions, exercising no self-command, living without rule, indolently and weakly following the first idea which presents itself, the first impulse, the first temptation, all this makes the heart irreligious. Then it is that men ask for clearer evidence, and reject the truth; then they say, "How can these things be?" or "This is a hard saying:" or "What sign showest Thou?" for "the heart of this people," in the prophet's words, "is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them." When He healed men in the days of His flesh, it was indeed by means of His own sacred Person, His touch, or His breath, or His voice; but still faith was the condition on the part of the suppliants; and now too, though He is with us ever so really and fully according to His promise, yet He requires faith, as before, in order to our restoration to His favour and to His image.

What a contrast to such thoughts as these is the conduct of the mass of men! Truly they are "without God in the world,"—that is, they do not keep before their minds, in any sense, that He is present, though unseen; they do not even admit that they ought to do so, or try to do so, or approach even to the idea that there are persons who do live as in the sight of the Invisible. Go into the general concourse of men, and what notion is there entertained of such a dependence upon, such an intercourse with, things unseen, as Scripture prescribes? They are engaged in their several trades and professions; they are active, companionable, and friendly; they are unexceptionable as far as the civilities and kindnesses of mutual intercourse are concerned; but what are they more? Have they seriousness? Are they under the habitual influence of religion? Do they sacrifice this life to the next? Is there any thing which they do or do not, which they would not do, or would not omit to do, were religion a mere idle tale? Is God in any one of their thoughts? Do they fear Him? Do they recollect that they are to be judged? What "marks" have they "of the Lord Jesus?" How show they that they are waiting for Him who has gone away only to come back again? What an awful sight does the baptized world present to any one who retires some few steps out of it! O fearful thought, a Day will come when every eye shall see Him bodily, whom they will not learn now to see spiritually! O fearful thought indeed, when all these indolent and careless men, to say nothing of open scoffers and profligates, will be gathered together before His Judgment-seat, to receive their

doom once for all! At present they look upon religion as a dream, and religious men as dreamers; they only think of them as narrow-minded men, or superstitiously strict, or weak, or fanciful, or hypocrites, or fanatical, or party-spirited; as persons who profess much, but are, after all, much the same as other men, governed by the same weaknesses, passions, and inducements.

O miserable and most dreadful Day of His coming, and who shall abide it? when those who will not acknowledge the secret glory, shall at length feel the manifested power of the Lamb; when those who will not discern His tokens now, but think His ordinances, His Church, His servants, to be but things of this world, will then see "the Sign of the Son of man in heaven," and against their will must believe and tremble. For "then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Let us be wise in time; let us seek Him "while it is called to-day;" let us "seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face evermore." Let us seek Him in His Temple, and in its ordinances; especially in that most sacred Ordinance in which He all but reveals to us His heavenly countenance, all but gives us to touch His hands and feet, and put our hand into His side, that we may see that it is He Himself, and that we are following no deceitful vision. He said to Mary, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father." He is now ascended, therefore we may touch Him. Let us, as far as is permitted us, approach Him, who walked upon the sea, and rebuked the wind, and multiplied the

loaves, and turned the water into wine, and made the clay give sight, and entered through the closed doors, and came and vanished at His will. Let us see Him by faith, though our eyes are holden, that we know it not. Evermore may He so be with us, a gracious Lord, whose "garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia," of "spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, and all trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, with all the chief spices[1]." So may He be with us evermore, moving our hearts within us, "until the day break and the shadows flee away."

[1] Ps. xlv. 8. Cant. iv. 14.

# SERMON X.

## THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH.

(EASTER.)

JOHN xvi. 16.

*"A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father."*

VERY opposite lessons are drawn in different parts of Scripture from the doctrine of Christ's leaving the world and returning to His Father; lessons so opposite the one to the other, that at first sight, a reader might even find a difficulty in reconciling them together. In an earlier season of His ministry, our Lord intimates that when He was removed, His disciples should sorrow,—that then was to be the special time for humiliation. "Can the children of the Bride-chamber mourn," He asks, "as long as the Bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and *then* shall they fast[1]." Yet in the words following the text, spoken by Him when He was going away, He says; "I will see you again, and your heart

[1] Matt. ix. 15.

shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." And He says shortly before it, "It is expedient for you that I go away." And again: "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more: but ye see Me." Thus Christ's going to the Father is at once a source of sorrow, because it involves His absence; and of joy, because it involves His presence. And out of the doctrine of His resurrection and ascension, spring those Christian paradoxes, often spoken of in Scripture, that we are sorrowing, yet always rejoicing; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.

This, indeed, is our state at present; we have lost Christ and we have found Him; we see Him not, yet we discern Him. We embrace His feet, yet He says, "Touch Me not." How is this? it is thus: we have lost the sensible and conscious perception of Him; we cannot look on Him, hear Him, converse with Him, follow Him from place to place; but we enjoy the spiritual, immaterial, inward, mental, real sight and possession of Him; a possession more real and more present than that which the Apostles had in the days of His flesh, *because* it is spiritual, *because* it is invisible. We know that the closer any object of this world comes to us, the less we can contemplate it and comprehend it. Christ has come so close to us in the Christian Church (if I may so speak), that we cannot gaze on Him or discern Him. He enters into us, He claims and takes possession of His purchased inheritance; He does not present Himself to us, but He takes us to Him. He makes us His members. Our faces are, as it were,

turned from Him; we see Him not, and know not of His presence, except by faith, because He is over us and within us. And thus we may at the same time lament because we are not conscious of His presence, as the Apostles enjoyed it before His death; and may rejoice because we know we do possess it even more than they, according to the text, "whom having not seen (that is, with the bodily eyes) ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls[1]."

Concerning this great and mysterious gift, the presence of Christ, invisible to sense, apprehended by faith, which seems to be spoken of in the text, and is suggested by this season of the year, I purpose now to say some few words.

Now observe what the promise is, in the text and the verses following—a new era was to commence, or what is called in Scripture "a day of the Lord." We know how much is said in Scripture about the awfulness and graciousness of a *day* of the Lord, which seems to be some special time of visitation, grace, judgment, restoration, righteousness, and glory. Much is said concerning days of the Lord in the Old Testament. In the beginning we read of those august days, seven in number, each perfect, perfect all together, in which all things were created, finished, blessed, acknowledged, approved by Almighty God. And all things will end with a day greater still, which will open with the coming of Christ from heaven, and the judgment; this is especially the

[1] 1 Pet. i. 8, 9.

Day of the Lord, and will introduce an eternity of blessedness in God's presence for all believers. And another special day predicted and fulfilled, is that long season which precedes and prepares for the day of heaven, viz. the Day of the Christian Church, the Day of the gospel, the Day of grace. This is a day much spoken of in the Prophets, and it is the day of which our Saviour speaks in the passage before us. Observe how solemn, how high a day it is: this is His account of it, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; your joy no man taketh from you. And in that Day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. . . . At that Day ye shall ask in my Name, and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father." The Day, then, that dawned upon the Church at the Resurrection, and beamed forth in full splendour at the Ascension, that Day which has no setting, which will be, not ended, but absorbed in Christ's glorious appearance from heaven to destroy sin and death; that Day in which we now are, is described in these words of Christ as a state of special Divine manifestation, of special introduction into the presence of God. By Christ, says the Apostle, "we have the access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." He "hath raised us

up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "Your life is hid with Christ in God." "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." And our Lord says; "I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. . . . We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." Thus we Christians stand in the courts of God Most High, and, in one sense, see His face; for He who once was on earth, has now departed from this visible scene of things in a mysterious, twofold way, both to His Father and into our hearts, thus making the Creator and His creatures one; according to His own words, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that Day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you[1]."

Now, in behalf of this mystery, I observe:—

First, that Christ really is with us now, whatever be the mode of it. This He says expressly Himself; "Lo, I *am with you* alway, even unto the end of the world." He even says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them[2]."

[1] Rom. v. 2. Eph. ii. 6. Col. iii. 3. Phil. iii. 20. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Gal. iii. 27. John xiv. 21—23. 18—20.

[2] Matt. xxviii. 20; xviii. 20.

And in a passage already quoted more than once, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." Christ's presence, then, is promised to us still, though He is on the right hand of the Father. You will say, "Yes; He is present as God." Nay, I answer; more than this, He is the Christ, and the Christ is promised, and Christ is man as well as God. This surely is plain even from the words of the text. He said He was going away. Did He go away as God or as man? "A little while, and ye shall not see Me;" this was on His death. He went away as man, He died as man; if, then, He promises to come again, surely He must mean that He would return as man, in the only sense, that is, in which He could return. As God He is ever present, never was otherwise than present, never went away; when His body died on the Cross and was buried, when His soul departed to the place of spirits, still He was with His disciples in His Divine ubiquity. The separation of soul and body could not touch His impassible everlasting Godhead. When then He says He should go away, and come again and abide for ever, He is speaking, not merely of His omnipresent Divine nature, but of His human nature. As being Christ, He says that He, the Incarnate Mediator, shall be with His Church for ever.

But again: you may be led to explain His declaration thus; "He *has* come again, but in His Spirit; that is, His Spirit has come instead of Him; and when it is said that He is with us, this only means that His Spirit is with us." No one, doubtless, can deny this most gracious and consolatory truth, that the Holy Ghost is

come; but why has He come? to supply Christ's absence, or to accomplish His presence? Surely to make Him present. Let us not for a moment suppose that God the Holy Ghost comes in such sense that God the Son remains away. No; He has not so come that Christ does not come, but rather He comes that Christ may come in His coming. Through the Holy Ghost we have communion with Father and Son. "In Christ we are builded together," says St. Paul, "for an habitation of God through the Spirit." "Ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." "Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." The Holy Spirit causes, faith welcomes, the indwelling of Christ in the heart. Thus the Spirit does not take the place of Christ in the soul, but secures that place to Christ. St. Paul insists much on this presence of Christ in those who have His Spirit. "Know ye not," he says, "that your bodies are the members of Christ?" "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body . . . ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" "Christ in you, the hope of glory." And St. John: "He that hath the Son, hath Life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life." And our Lord Himself, "Abide in Me and I in you: I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." The Holy Spirit, then, vouchsafes to come to us, that by His coming Christ may come to us, not carnally or visibly, but may enter into us. And

thus He is both present and absent; absent in that He has left the earth, present in that He has not left the faithful soul; or, as He says Himself, "The *world* seeth Me no more, but *ye* see Me [1]."

You will say, How can He be present to the Christian and in the Church, yet not be on earth, but on the right hand of God? I answer, that the Christian Church is made up of faithful *souls*, and how can any of us say where the soul is, simply and really? The soul indeed acts through the body, and perceives through the body; but where is it? or what has it to do with place? or why should it be a thing incredible that the power of the Spirit should so visit the soul as to open upon it a Divine manifestation, which yet it perceives not, because its present perceptions are only through the body? Who shall limit the power of the gracious Spirit of God? How know we, for instance, but that He makes Christ present with us, by making us present with Christ? As the earth goes round the sun, yet the sun is said to move, so our souls, in fact, may be taken up to Christ, when He is said to come to us. But no need to insist on one mode in which the mystery may be conceived, when ten thousand ways are possible with God, of which we know nothing. Scripture says enough to show us that influences may be exerted upon the soul so marvellous, that we cannot decide whether the soul remains in the body or not, while subjected to

[1] Eph. ii. 22. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Eph. iii. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 15; xii. 13. 27. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Col. i. 27. 1 John v. 12. John xv. 4, 5; xiv. 19.

them. St. Paul, speaking of himself, says, "Whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth: . . . caught up to the third heaven." And he repeats his statement: "I knew such a man," meaning himself, "whether in the body I cannot tell, or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth: how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter." St. Paul was brought into Paradise, yet his body remained where it was; and whether his soul was separated from it, was a question which he could not decide. How can we pretend to decide what the Holy Spirit may or may not do towards faithful souls now, and whether He does not manifest Christ to and in them, by bringing them to Christ? Again; consider Satan's power in showing our Lord all the kingdoms of the world "in *a moment of time*;" may not the Almighty Spirit much more do with us, what the evil one did with our Lord? May He not in less than a moment bring our souls into God's presence, while our bodies are on earth?

And again; while we know so little about our own souls, on the other hand, we are utterly ignorant of the state in which our Blessed Lord exists at present, and the relation of this visible world to Him; or whether it may not be possible for Him, in some mysterious way, to come to us, though He is set down on the right hand of God. Did He not, after His resurrection, come into a room, of which the doors were shut, yet suffer Himself to be handled, to prove that He was not a spirit? Certainly then, though He is

clothed in our nature, and is perfect man, yet His glorified body is not confined by those laws under which our mortal bodies lie.

But further; whether it is difficult to conceive or no, Scripture actually gives us at least one instance of His appearing after His ascension, as if to satisfy us that His presence is possible, though it be mysterious. We all know that He has often vouchsafed to appear to His saints in *visions*. Thus He appeared to St. John, as related in the Book of Revelation; and to St. Paul, when he was at Corinth, at Jerusalem several times, and in the ship. *These* appearances were not an actual presence of Christ, as we may conjecture, but impressions divinely made, and shadows cast upon the mind. And in the same way we may explain His appearing to St. Stephen. When that blessed Martyr said, "Behold I see the heavens open, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God," we may suppose he did not see this great sight really, but only had a vision of it. These, I repeat, may be *visions;* but what shall we say to Christ's appearance to St. Paul on his conversion, while he was on the way to Damascus? For then the Lord Jesus plainly was seen and heard by him close at hand. "He fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest[1]." How was this? We do not know. Can a body be in two places at once? I do not say so; I only say, Here is a

[1] Acts ix. 4, 5.

mystery. By way of contrast with this *real sight* of the Lord, we are presently told that to Ananias the Lord appeared "in *a vision*." And hence, moreover, when Ananias came to Saul, he said that God had chosen him that *he* should "*see* that Just One, and *hear* the voice of His mouth[1]." And hence, too, he says himself in his Epistle to the Corinthians, "Am I not an Apostle? am I not free? have I not *seen* Jesus Christ our Lord[2]?" Would he have said this, if he had had but a vision of Him? Had he not many more visions of Him, not one only? And again, after mentioning our Lord's appearance to St. Peter, the Eleven, and five hundred brethren at once, and St. James, he adds, "last of all, He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time[3]." That is, he speaks of his having been favoured with a sight of Christ in as real, true, and literal a sense, as that in which the other Apostles had seen Him. St. Paul then saw Him, and heard Him speak, who was on the right hand of God. And this literal sight seems to have been, for some unknown reason, necessary for the office of an Apostle; for, in accordance with St. Paul's words, just now cited, St. Peter says, when an Apostle was to be chosen in the place of Judas, "Of these men which have companied with us . . . from the baptism of John unto that same day when He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection." And again, to Cornelius, "Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God,

[1] Acts xxii. 14. [2] 1 Cor. ix. 1. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 8.

even to us[1]." If St. Paul saw only a vision of Christ, and not Christ "verily and indeed," in that case he was not a witness of His resurrection. But if he *did* see Him, it is possible for Christ to be present with *us* also, as with him.

Once more: it may be said that "St. Paul was *conscious* of the presence of Christ on his conversion, and that he actually *saw* the sights and *heard* the sounds of Paradise, but that we see and hear nothing. We, then, are not in Christ's presence, else we should be conscious of it." Now, with a view of meeting this objection, let us turn to the account of His appearances to His disciples after the Resurrection, which are most important, first, as showing that such an unconscious communion with Christ is possible; next, that it is likely to be the sort of communion now granted to us, from the circumstance that in that period of forty days after the Resurrection, He began to be in that relation towards His Church, in which He is still, and probably intended to intimate to us thereby what His presence with us is now.

Now observe what was the nature of His presence in the Church after His Resurrection. It was this, that He came and went as He pleased; that material substances, such as the fastened doors, were no impediments to His coming; and that when He was present His disciples did not, as a matter of course, know Him. St. Mark says He appeared to the two disciples who were going into the country, to Emmaus, "*in another form.*" St. Luke, who gives the account more at length, says,

[1] Acts i. 21, 22; x. 40, 41.

that while He talked with them their heart burned within them. And it is worth remarking, that the two disciples do not seem to have been conscious of this at the time, but on looking back, they recollected that as *having* been, which did not strike them while it *was*. "*Did* not," they say, "*did* not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" But at the time, their hearts seem to have been holden (if we may use the expression) as well as their eyes. They were receiving impressions, but could not *realize* to themselves that they were receiving them; afterwards, however, they became aware of what had been. Let us observe, too, *when* it was that their eyes were opened; here we are suddenly introduced to the highest and most solemn Ordinance of the Gospel, for it was when He consecrated and brake the Bread that their eyes were opened. There is evidently a stress laid on this, for presently St. Luke sums up his account of the gracious occurrence with an allusion to it in particular; "They told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread." For so it was ordained, that Christ should not be both seen and known at once; first He was seen, then He was known. Only by faith is He known to be present; He is not recognized by sight. When He opened His disciples' eyes, He at once vanished. He removed His visible presence, and left but a memorial of Himself. He vanished from sight that He might be present in a sacrament; and in order to connect His visible presence with His presence invisible, He for one instant manifested Himself to

their open eyes; manifested Himself, if I may so speak, while He passed from His hiding-place of sight without knowledge, to that of knowledge without sight.

Or again: consider the account of His appearing to St. Mary Magdalene. While she stood at the sepulchre weeping He appeared, but she knew Him not. When He revealed Himself, He did not, indeed, at once vanish away, but He would not let her touch Him; as if, in another way, to show that His presence in His new kingdom was not to be one of sense. The two disciples were not allowed to *see* Him after recognizing Him, St. Mary Magdalene was not allowed to *touch* Him. But afterwards, St. Thomas *was* allowed both to see and touch; he had the full evidence of sense: but observe what our Lord says to him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Faith is better than sight or touch.

Let so much suffice, by way of suggesting thoughts upon this most solemn and elevating subject. Christ has promised He will be with us to the end,—be with us, not only as He is in the unity of the Father and the Son, not in the Omnipresence of the Divine Nature, but personally, as the Christ, as God and man; not present with us locally and sensibly, but still really, in our hearts and to our faith. And it is by the Holy Ghost that this gracious communion is effected. How He effects it we know not; in what precisely it consists we know not. We see Him not; but we are to believe that we possess Him,—that we have been brought under the virtue of His healing hand, of His life-giving breath,

of the manna flowing from His lips, and of the blood issuing from His side. And hereafter, on looking back, we shall be conscious that we have been thus favoured. Such is the Day of the Lord in which we find ourselves, as if in fulfilment of the words of the prophet, "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee. And it shall come to pass in that Day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light[1]." Nay, even before the end comes, Christians, on looking back on years past, will feel, at least in a degree, that Christ has been with them, though they knew it not, only believed it, at the time. They will even recollect then the burning of their hearts. Nay, though they seemed not even to believe any thing at the time, yet afterwards, if they have come to Him in sincerity, they will experience a sort of heavenly fragance and savour of immortality, when they least expect it, rising upon their minds, as if in token that God has been with them, and investing all that has taken place, which before seemed to them but earthly, with beams of glory. And this is true, in one sense, of all the rites and ordinances of the Church, of all providences that happen to us; that, on looking back on them, though they seemed without meaning at the time, elicited no strong feeling, or were even painful and distasteful, yet if we come to them and submit to them in faith, they are afterwards transfigured, and we feel that it has been good for us to be there; and we have a testimony, as a

[1] Zech. xiv. 5—7.

reward of our obedience, that Christ has fulfilled His promise, and, as He said, is here through the Spirit, though He be with the Father.

May He enable us to make full trial of His bounty, and to obtain a full measure of blessing. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her and that right early. . . . Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge[1]."

[1] Ps. xlvi. 4, 5. 10, 11.

# SERMON XI.

## THE EUCHARISTIC PRESENCE.

(EASTER.)

JOHN vi. 50.

*"This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die."*

THE quarter of the year from Ash-Wednesday to Trinity Sunday may fittingly be called the Sacramental Season, as the Season preceding it is the Season of grace; and as we are specially called in the Christmas Season to sincerity of purpose, so now we are called to faith. God does good to those who are good and true of heart; and He reveals His mysteries to the believing. The earnest heart is the good ground in which faith takes root, and the truths of the Gospel are like the dew, the sunshine, and the soft rain, which make that heavenly seed to grow.

The text speaks of the greatest and highest of all the Sacramental mysteries, which faith has been vouchsafed, that of Holy Communion. Christ, who died and rose again for us, is in it spiritually present, in the fulness of His death and of His resurrection. We call His presence in this Holy Sacrament a

spiritual presence, not as if "spiritual" were but a name or mode of speech, and He were really absent, but by way of expressing that He who is present there can neither be seen nor heard; that He cannot be approached or ascertained by any of the senses; that He is not present in place, that He is not present carnally, though He is really present. And how this is, of course is a mystery. All that we know or need know is that He *is* given to us, and that in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Now, with reference to the text and the chapter from which it is taken, I begin by observing, what at first sight one would think no one could doubt, that this chapter of St. John does treat of the Lord's Supper, and is, in fact, a comment upon the account of it, given by the other three Evangelists. We know it is St. John's way to supply what his brethren omit, and that especially in matters of doctrine; and in like manner to omit what they record. Hence, while all three give an account of the institution of Holy Communion at the last Supper, St. John omits it; and, because they omit to enlarge upon the great gift contained in it, he enters upon it. This, I say, is his rule: thus, for instance, St. Matthew and St. Mark give an account of the accusation brought against our Lord at His trial, that He had said He could destroy and build again the Temple of God in three days. They do not inform us when He so said; accordingly, St. John supplies the omission; and, while he passes over the charge at the time of His trial, he relates in his second chapter the circumstances some years before out of which it was framed. The

Jews had come to Him and asked Him for a sign; then said He, referring in His mind to His resurrection which was to be, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up;" meaning by Temple His own body, and by His raising it up His resurrection, after He had been put to death.

Again; St. Matthew and St. Mark also give an account of His instituting the Sacrament of Baptism. Christ instituted it on His ascending on high, but He did not explain the meaning and value of Baptism, at least there is no record of His doing so in St. Matthew and St. Mark. But St. John, while He omits mention of the institution of that Sacrament after the Resurrection, does teach us its doctrinal meaning, by means of a previous discourse of our Lord's with Nicodemus on the subject, a discourse which he alone of the Evangelists introduces. And in like manner, I say, in the chapter before us he explains as a doctrine, what the other Evangelists deliver as an ordinance. And, further, it is remarkable that in our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, no express mention is made of Baptism, though Baptism is evidently the subject of that discourse. Our Lord speaks of being born "of *water* and the Spirit;" He does not say, "of Baptism and the Spirit," yet none of us can doubt that Baptism is meant. In like manner, in the passage before us, He does not say definitely that bread and wine are His Body and Blood; but He speaks only of bread, and, again, of His flesh and blood; words, however, which as evidently refer to the Sacrament of His Supper, as His discourse to Nicodemus refers to Baptism, in spite

of His not naming Baptism in express words. Of course it would be very unreasonable to say that when He spoke of "water and the Spirit," He did not allude to Baptism; and it is as unreasonable, surely, to say that in the chapter before us He does not refer to His Holy Supper.

The bearing, then, of our Lord's sacred words would seem to be as follows, if one may venture to investigate it. At Capernaum, in the chapter now before us, He solemnly declares to His Apostles that none shall live for ever, but such as eat and drink His flesh and blood; and then afterwards, just before He was crucified, as related in the other three Gospels, He points out to them the way in which this mystery of grace was to be fulfilled in them. He assigns the consecrated Bread as that Body of which He had spoken, and the consecrated Wine as His Blood; and in partaking of the Bread and the Cup, they were partakers of His Body and Blood.

It is remarkable, too, considering that our Lord's institution of His Supper took place just before His betrayal by Judas, and that Judas had just partaken of it, that in the discourse before us He alludes to Judas. "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" as if He had before His mind, in His divine prescience, what was to take place when He instituted the Sacrament formally. Observe, too, at the time of that last Supper, He recurs to the idea of *choosing* them. "I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen[1]."

When, then, Christ used the words of the text and of

[1] John xiii. 18.

other parts of the chapter containing it, He was describing prospectively that gift, which, in due season, the consecrated bread and wine were to convey to His Church for ever. Speaking with reference to what was to be, He says, "I am that Bread of Life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever: and the Bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

In corroboration I would observe, that our Lord had been just then working the miracle of the loaves, in which He had actually blessed and broken the Bread; *upon this*, He goes on to say as follows, "I have wrought a miracle on the bread and fed you, but the time shall come when I will give you the true Eucharistic Bread, which is not like these perishable barley loaves, but such, that by it you shall live for ever, for it is My flesh." When, then, before He was taken away, He *did* take bread, and blessed, and brake, using just the same action as He had used in the instance of the miracle of the loaves, and even *called it* His body, how could the Apostles doubt that by that significant action He intended to recall to their minds His discourse recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John, and that they were to recognize in that action the interpretation of His discourse? He had said He would give them a bread which should be His flesh and should have life, and surely they recollected this well. Who among us, had he been present, would not under

such circumstances, have recognized in His institution of His Supper the fulfilment of that previous promise? Surely, then, we cannot doubt that this announcement in St. John does look on towards, and is accomplished in, the consecrated Bread and Wine of Holy Communion.

If this be so, it requires no proof at all how great is the gift in that Sacrament. If this chapter does allude to it, then the very words "Flesh and Blood" show it. Nor do they show it at all the less, if we do not know what they precisely mean; for on the face of the matter they evidently mean something very high, so high that *therefore* we cannot comprehend it.

Nothing can show more clearly how high the blessing is, than to observe that the Church's tendency has been, not to detract from its marvellousness, but to increase it. The Church has never thought little of the gift; so far from it, we know that one very large portion of Christendom holds more than we hold. That belief, which goes beyond ours, shows how great the gift is really. I allude to the doctrine of what is called Transubstantiation, which we do not admit; or that the bread and wine cease to be, and that Christ's sacred Body and Blood are directly seen, touched, and handled, under the *appearances* of Bread and Wine. This our Church considers there is no ground for saying, and our Lord's own words contain marvel enough, even without adding any thing to them by way of explanation. Let us, then, now consider them in themselves, apart from additions which came afterwards.

He says, then, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.

Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed."

1. About these words I observe, first, that they evidently declare on the face of them some very great mystery. How can they be otherwise taken? If they do not, they must be a figurative way of declaring something which is not mysterious, but plain and intelligible. But is it conceivable that He who is the Truth and Love itself, should have used difficult words when plain words would do? Why should He have used words, the sole effect of which, in that case, would be to perplex, to startle us needlessly? Does His mercy delight in creating difficulties? Does He put stumbling-blocks in our way without cause? Does He excite hopes, and then disappoint them? It is possible; He may have some deep purpose in so doing: but which is more likely, that His meaning is beyond us, or His words beyond His meaning? All who read such awful words as those in question will be led by the first impression of them, either with the disciples to go back, as at a hard saying, or with St. Peter to welcome what is promised: they will be excited in one way or the other, with incredulous surprise or with believing hope? And are the feelings of these opposite witnesses, discordant indeed, yet all of them deep, after all unfounded? Are they to go for nothing? Are they no token of our Saviour's real meaning? This desire, and again this aversion, so naturally raised, are they without a real object, and the mere consequence of a general mistake

on all hands, of what Christ meant as imagery, for literal truth? Surely this is very improbable.

2. Next, consider our Lord's allusion to the Manna. Persons there are who explain our eating Christ's flesh and blood, as merely meaning our receiving a *pledge* of the *effects* of the *passion* of His Body and Blood; that is, in other words, of the *favour* of Almighty God: but how can Christ's giving us His Body and Blood mean merely His giving us a pledge of His favour? Surely these awful words are far too clear and precise to be thus carelessly treated. Christ, as I have said, surely would not use such definite terms, did He intend to convey an idea so far removed from their meaning and so easy of expression in simple language. Now it increases the force of this consideration to observe that the manna, to which He compares His gift, was not a figure of speech, but a something definite and particular, really given, really received. The manna was not simply health, or life, or God's favour, but a certain something which caused health, continued life, and betokened God's favour. The manna was a gift external to the Israelites, and external also to God's own judgment of them and resolve concerning them, a gift created by Him and partaken by His people. And Christ, in like manner, says, that He Himself is to us the *true* Manna, the *true* Bread that came down from heaven; not like that manna which could not save its partakers from death, but a life-imparting manna. What therefore the manna was in the wilderness, that surely is the spiritual manna in the Christian Church; the manna in the wilderness was a real gift, taken and eaten; so is the manna in the Church. It is

not God's mercy, or favour, or imputation; it is not a state of grace, or the promise of eternal life, or the privileges of the Gospel, or the new covenant; it is not, much less, the doctrine of the Gospel, or faith in that doctrine; but it is what our Lord says it is, the gift of His own precious Body and Blood, really given, taken, and eaten as the manna might be (though in a way unknown), at a certain particular time, and a certain particular spot; namely, as I have already made it evident, at the time and spot when and where the Holy Communion is celebrated.

3. Next, I observe, that our Lord reproves the multitude, for not dwelling on the miracle of the loaves *as* a miracle, but only as a means of gaining food for the body. Now observe, this is *contrary* to what He elsewhere says, with a view of discountenancing the Jews' desire after signs and wonders. It would seem then as if there must be something peculiar and singular in what He is here setting before them. He generally represses their desire for signs, but here He stimulates it. He finds fault here, because they did not dwell upon the *miracle*. "Ye seek Me," He says, "not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." Now supposing the Eucharistic Gift is a special Sign, the Sign which He meant to give them for ever of His Divine power, this will account for the difference between His conduct on this occasion and on others, it being as unbelieving to overlook signs when given, as to ask for them when withheld. It will account for His bidding them marvel, when about to promise them Bread from heaven. They were but imi-

tating their ancestors in the wilderness. Their ancestors, on the seventh day, went out to gather manna in spite of Moses' telling them they would not find it. What was this but to look for mere food, and to forget that it was miraculously given, and as such immediately dependent on the Giver? Let me ask, is their conduct in this age very different, who come to the Lord's Table without awe, admiration, hope; without that assemblage of feelings which the expectation of so transcendent a marvel should raise in us? Let us fear, lest a real, though invisible work of power being vouchsafed to us, greater far than that of the loaves, which related only to this life's sustenance, we lose the benefit of it by disbelieving it. This reflection is strengthened by finding that St. Paul expressly warns the Corinthians of the great peril of "not *discerning* the Lord's Body."

4. In what has been said, it has been implied that the miracle of the Loaves was a type of Holy Communion; this it is all but declared to be in the chapter before us, and much follows from it. For let it be considered, if the type be a miracle, which it is, how great must the fulfilment be, unless the shadow be greater than the reality? unless indeed we are willing to argue in the spirit of those who deny the Atonement, on the ground that though the Jewish Priests were types of Christ, the Antitype need not be a Priest Himself. Moreover, the incomprehensible nature of the miracle of the loaves is a kind of protection of the mystery of the Eucharist against objections with which men are wont to assail it; as, for instance, that it is impossible. For to speak of five thousand persons being fed with five

loaves, may be speciously represented to be almost a contradiction in terms. How could it be? did the substance of the bread grow? or was it the same bread here and there and every where, for this man and for that, at one and the same time? Or was it created in the shape of bread, in that ultimate condition into which the grain is reduced by the labour of man, and this created again and again out of nothing, till the whole five thousand were satisfied. What, in short, is *meant* by multiplying the loaves? As to Christ's other miracles, they are, it may be said, intelligible though supernatural. We do not know *how* a blind man's eyes are opened, or the dead raised; but we know what *is meant* by saying that the blind saw, or the dead arose: but what *is meant* by saying that the loaves fed five thousand persons? Such then is the objection which may be brought against the miracle of the loaves; and let it be observed, it is just such as this which is urged against the mystery of Christ's Presence in Holy Communion. If the marvellousness of the miracle of the loaves is no real objection to its truth, neither is the marvellousness of the Eucharistic presence any real difficulty in our believing that gift.

And as if still more closely to connect this Holy Sacrament with the miracle of the Loaves, and to make the latter interpret the former, our Lord, as I have observed, wrought the miracle of the loaves by means of the same outward acts, which He observed in the mystery of His Supper, and which His Apostles have carefully recorded as the appointed means of consecrating it. St. John says, He *took* the loaves, and

when *He had given thanks,* He *distributed* to the disciples." Compare this with St. Luke's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper. "He *took* bread, and *gave thanks,* and brake it, and *gave* unto them." Again, a fuller account of the consecration of the loaves is given by the other Evangelists thus:—"He . . . *took* the five loaves and the two fishes," says St. Matthew, "and looking up to heaven, He *blessed,* and *brake,* and *gave* the loaves to His disciples." And what, on the other hand, is told us by the same Evangelist, in his account of the institution of the Holy Communion? "Jesus *took* bread and *blessed* it, and *brake* it, and *gave* it to the disciples." Again, in the second miracle of the seven loaves, He observed the same form:—"He *took* the seven loaves and the fishes, and *gave thanks,* and *brake* them, and *gave* to His disciples." And the form is the same in the account of our Lord's celebration of the Sacrament after His resurrection:—"As He sat at meat with them, He *took* bread and *blessed* it, and *brake,* and *gave* to them." And of St. Paul we read, "he *took* bread and *gave thanks* to God in the presence of them all, and when he had *broken* it, he began to eat[1]."

One cannot doubt, then, that the taking bread, blessing or giving thanks, and breaking is a necessary form in the Lord's Supper, since it is so much insisted on in these narratives; and it evidently betokens something extraordinary,—else why *should* it be insisted on?—and what that is, the miracle of the Loaves

[1] John vi. 11. Luke xxii. 19. Matt. xiv. 19. Matt. xxvi. 26. Matt. xv. 36. Luke xxiv. 30. Acts xxvii. 35.

tells us. For there the same form is observed, and there it was Christ's outward instrument in working a great "work of God." The feeding then of the multitude with the loaves, interprets the Lord's Supper; and as the one is a supernatural work, so is the other also.

5. One more observation I will make besides. At first sight, an objection may be brought against what has been said from a circumstance, which, when examined, will be found rather to tell the other way. The Jews objected to our Lord, that He had said what was incredible, when He spoke of giving us His flesh. They "strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Our Saviour in answer, instead of retracting what He had said, spoke still more strongly—"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." But when they still murmured at it, and said, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?"—then He did in appearance withdraw His words. He said, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." It would take us too long to enter now into the meaning of this declaration; but let us, for argument's sake, allow that He seems in them to qualify the wonderful words He had used at first; what follows from such an admission? This:—that our Lord acted according to His usual course on other occasions when persons refused His gracious announcements, not urging and insisting on them, but as if withdrawing them, and thus in one sense aiding those persons even in rejecting what they ought to have accepted without hesitation. This rule

of God's dealings with unbelief, we find most fully exemplified in the instance of Pharaoh, whose heart God hardened because he himself hardened it. And so in this very chapter, as if in allusion to some such great law, He says, "Murmur not among yourselves; No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him;" as if He said, "It is by a Divine gift that ye believe; beware, lest by objections you provoke God to take from you His aid, His preventing and enlightening grace." And then, after they *had* complained, He did in consequence withdraw from them that gracious light which He had given, and spoke the words in question about the flesh and spirit, which would seem to carnal minds to unsay, or explain away, what He had said. But observe, He adds, "There are some of you that believe not. . . . *Therefore* said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto Him of My Father."

All this is parallel, let it be observed, to His dealings with the Jews in the tenth chapter of the same Gospel. He there declares, "I and My Father are One." The Jews, instead of embracing, stumble at the truth, and accuse Him of blasphemy, as if He being a man made Himself God. This was their inference from His words, and a correct inference, just as in the other case they rightly understood Him to promise that He would give us His flesh to eat. But when they, instead of embracing the truth which they had correctly inferred, instead of humbling themselves before the Mystery, repel it from them, He does not force it upon them. He does not tell them, that it *is* a

correct conclusion which they had drawn, but He recedes (as it were) and explains away His words. He asks them whether the rulers and prophets spoken of in the Old Testament were not called gods figuratively; if so, much more might He call Himself God, and the Son of God, being the Christ. He does not tell them that He *is* God, though He is; but He argues with them as if He admitted as true the ground of their objection. In judgment, He reduces His creed to names and figures. As then He is really God, though He seemed on one occasion to say that He was but called so figuratively, so He gives us verily and indeed His Body and Blood in Holy Communion, though, on another occasion, after saying so, He seemingly went on to explain those words merely into a strong saying; and as none but heretics take advantage of His apparent denial that He is God, so none but they ought to make use of His apparent denial that He vouchsafes to us His flesh, and that the Holy Communion is a high and heavenly means of giving it.

Such reflections as the foregoing lead us to this conclusion,—to understand that it is our duty to make much of Christ's miracles of love; and instead of denying or feeling cold towards them, to desire to possess our hearts with them. There is indeed a mere carnal curiosity,—a high-minded, irreverent prying into things sacred; but there is also a holy and devout curiosity which all who love God will in their measure feel. The former is exemplified in the instance of the men of Bethshemesh, when they looked into the ark; the latter in the case of the Holy Angels, who (as St. Peter tells

us) "desire to look into" the grace of God in the Gospel. Under the Gospel surely there are wonders performed, such as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." Let us feel interest and awful expectation at the news of them; let us put ourselves in the way of them; let us wait upon God day by day for the treasures of grace, which are hid in Christ, which are great beyond words or thought.

Above all, let us pray Him to draw us to Him, and to give us faith. When we feel that His mysteries are too severe for us, and occasion us to doubt, let us earnestly wait on Him for the gift of humility and love. Those who love and who are humble will apprehend them;—carnal minds do not seek them, and proud minds are offended at them;—but while love desires them, humility sustains them. Let us pray Him then to give us such a real and living insight into the blessed doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God, of His birth of a Virgin, His atoning death, and resurrection, that we may desire that the Holy Communion may be the effectual type of that gracious Economy. No one realizes the Mystery of the Incarnation but must feel disposed towards that of Holy Communion. Let us pray Him to give us an earnest longing after Him—a thirst for His presence—an anxiety to find Him—a joy on hearing that He is to be found, even now, under the veil of sensible things,—and a good hope that *we* shall find Him there. Blessed indeed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed. They have their reward *in* believing; they enjoy the contemplation of a mysterious blessing, which does not even enter into the thoughts

of other men; and while they are more blessed than others, in the gift vouchsafed to them, they have the additional privilege of knowing that they are vouchsafed it.

# SERMON XII.

## FAITH THE TITLE FOR JUSTIFICATION.

(EASTER.)

MATT. viii. 11.

*"Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."*

OUR Lord here says, what He frequently says elsewhere, that the Gentiles, who were heretofore thought reprobate, should inherit the favour of God with Abraham and the other patriarchs. Moreover, He says, that they would gain that great privilege *through faith;* for the words immediately preceding the text are, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith," that is, as that of the Centurion, "no, not in Israel;" then He adds, "and I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." St. Paul, it is scarcely necessary to observe, declares the same thing most emphatically; so that he may be called the Apostle, as of the Gentiles, so of faith:—as for instance, "the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen *through faith,*

preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall *all* nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham [1]." In the history of Cornelius's baptism, the same great truth is declared by St. Peter, with some accidental variety of expression. "In every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him [2]."

Now here the question may be asked, and has been asked,—If all that is necessary for acceptance with God be faith in Christ, how is Church Communion, how are Sacraments, necessary? It is taught in Church, that the grace of Christ is not a mere favourable regard with which He views us, a mere state of acceptance and external imputation of His merits given to faith, but that it is a real and spiritual principle residing in the Church, and communicated from the Church into the heart of individuals, and extended far and wide, according as they come for it to the Church, and diffused all over the earth by their joining the Church. This is what is taught by the Church itself of its own gift; and the question is, How is this consistent with the impression legitimately produced on the mind by such passages of Scripture as the text and others such as I have cited? *They* seem to speak as if the great gift of Christ were His favourable account of us, and the means of it were faith; whereas *we* seem to speak of it as being an inward renewal in us, and of the means of it being an union with the Church. They seem to speak of it as what any one may gain for himself, and have by himself; we speak of it as a certain benefit, one and the

[1] Gal. iii. 8, 9. [2] Acts x. 35.

same for all, gained by coming to it and for it. They seem to speak of the way of life as being something individual and solitary; we speak of it as a social and united enterprise, and a journey in company.

To this it may be replied, that it is unfair and dangerous to insist on certain texts to the exclusion of others; that true though it be, that some texts speak of faith and nothing else, still others speak of Church communion and nothing else, as being the way of salvation; and if so, *both*, both faith and Church communion, are necessary, and that one will not save without the other; that our duty is to come to Christ *in* faith, *through* the Church,—and if we do this, we shall observe the rule given us both in the one set of texts, and in the other, —and that they deal with Scripture as violently, who think to be saved by faith without Church fellowship, as those who think to be saved by Church fellowship without faith. For instance, if our Lord says, "All things are possible to him that believeth," yet He elsewhere says, "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." If He says, "Believe, and ye shall have," yet elsewhere, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." If St. Paul says, that we are justified by faith without the works of the Law, still he expressly assures us, that Christ saves us "by the laver of regeneration," "that as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ," and there is "one baptism, one body, one spirit," as well as "one faith," and that the Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth." Further, if St. Peter says, that

every one is accepted with God who fears Him and works righteousness, yet he elsewhere says that "baptism saves us," and exhorts his hearers to be baptized, in order to the remission of their sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

And further, it may be shown, that nothing can be more natural than this union of *various* distinct means, in order to gain some particular benefit, and that there is nothing forced in thus interpreting the one set of expressions in harmony with the other; and nothing in the impression conveyed by the one inconsistent with the impression conveyed by the other. We have cases of this kind every day, and we use similar forms of speech every day. For instance, were a person to say that he would give some benefit, food or clothing, to any poor person who wanted it, would any one say that he broke his promise, if he appointed some particular place where the food or the clothing was to be got, and where those who desired it must go for it? And would it be thought reasonable, if a poor person accosted him abruptly in the public way, and insisted on his giving it directly from himself, without his having to go to the place appointed? and why, forsooth?—on the ground that the other had said that he would give to any one who asked of him. As then a charitable person might say, "Ask, and ye shall have," and yet might not mean to excuse those who asked from the necessity of going to some place, and at some hour, when and where he dispensed his charity; so in like manner Christ may say by Himself or His Apostles, "Ask, and ye shall receive." "Believe, and ye shall be saved," and

yet may mean to enjoin upon us certain rules, and to appoint a certain treasure-house, for our gaining that gift to which our asking and our faith are suffieient to entitle us.

This is so plain, that it is hardly necessary to say so much about it; but it may be objected, that it is more true in itself, than to the present purpose: for there are passages of Scripture, it may be said, which speak so largely and absolutely, that to suppose any conditions implied in them which are not specified, any other means of gaining God's favour besides simple faith, is doing violence to their language. For instance, suppose a rich man promised an alms to his poor neighbour, and then, when the latter came for it, said, "I promised you indeed an alms, and as a free gift—and I mean to give it you—nevertheless, I shall exact *one* condition, which I did not then mention, but which I meant nevertheless, and which is not inconsistent in set terms with what I said, and this one condition is, that you should walk some five hundred miles for my bounty, to some place where I have stored it, or that you should first learn a foreign language, and petition me in it;"—every one would feel that such conduct was a mockery in the rich man, and a cruelty to the poor one. Now, it is contended by the persons I speak of, that faith is so prominently spoken of in certain passages of Scripture, as *the* means of gaining the benefits of Christ's death, that it *must* be meant to be the *only* means; the silence observed in such passages concerning other means being equivalent to a denial of any other; and therefore, that in very truth we must be justified by faith only in a full and

absolute and real sense (if the word of Scripture be sure), not in a certain sense merely, or in a certain point of view, but in a sense peculiar and proper, by a prerogative which no other means possesses, whether rite, or work, or temper of mind.

For example, it is said by St. Paul without restriction, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that *call* upon Him. For *whosoever* shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" And then the Apostle concludes; "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Surely, it may be said, these words plainly do imply that the *knowledge* of the truth is all that is necessary for any person's application of it to himself. Give him a book, the Bible; give him the revealed doctrine, or what St. Paul calls the word of God; give him a preacher;—he requires nothing more. He may at will seize, claim, appropriate, use the promise. He has but to call, and he will be answered; he has but to believe, and he is justified. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation [1]."

Again; how wide, it may be said, how comprehensive, how simple are the words, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth,

[1] Rom. x. 10—17.

and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened[1]." Is Scripture, it may be said, for plain men or not?—does it speak to the artless, guileless, and simple-minded, or does it require a refined and cultivated intellect to understand it? If to the poor the Gospel is preached, can we doubt that it is meant to convey that meaning which at first sight it has?—that all to whom the sound of the Gospel comes have but to call on God, to ask, to pray, to believe, and according to their faith so shall it be done unto them?

And such, too, it may be added, was St. Paul's language to the jailor at Philippi; he said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house[2]."

There is certainly much in such considerations, and they are by no means lightly to be put aside. They do seem, with some explanation, to be true. I mean, it does seem as if every one to whom the message of life came, had an *offer* of it; had, if he chose to avail himself of it, an interest in it, a right to take it to himself; that his hearing is his warrant, his knowledge is his evidence, that his believing is his power. This would seem to be a broad truth, whatever else is true; and in the present most miserable state of Christendom there is comfort in believing it. I proceed, then, to explain in what sense it is true, what it implies, and what it does not involve, and what follows from it.

I say, then, that hearing and believing,—that is, knowing, confessing, and asking,—give us under the

[1] Matt. vii. 7, 8.

[2] Acts xvi. 31.

covenant of grace a title, nay, are the sole necessary right and title to receive the gifts purchased for us by our Lord Jesus on the Cross. And now observe, first, what this does *not* imply.

1. It does not imply any thing about the time or mode of our justification. Faith is our right and title to be justified, the sole right and title necessary; but has a person forthwith that, to which he has a right? is nothing more necessary for the possession and enjoyment of things than a just title to them? Is it so in human matters? is not a right the first thing indeed, but is it all that is necessary for having, holding, and using? Are there no forms to be gone through, no necessary instruments of possession? Or, take again the case of the children of Christian parents. The infant children of Christians have a right to be made Christians; but are they made Christians merely *by* the right to be so made? if so, why do we baptize them? Faith, then, in the general scheme of the Gospel, is what their very birth and origin is in the particular case of the children of Christians. It constitutes a claim in our case that we should be made Christians; it is an evidence, an inward spiritual token from God that He means us to be made Christians; it is a promise from Him who is the Author and Finisher of our faith, that He means us, that He wills us, to be Christians. To him that hath, more shall be given. Him whom God gifts with faith, will He also in due time gift with evangelical, justifying grace: but the first gift does not give the second gift, it does not involve it; it does but prepare for it, it does but constitute a title to it.

Again: good works form our title for heaven; but does a person who is fruitful in good works and prepared for the next world at once die? or rather, I should ask, is he without death translated at once both soul and body into heaven? is there nothing to wait for? nothing to go through, even in the case of those who are ready for death? are there no persons detained in the flesh, who, if they died yesterday or a year since, would go to heaven? are there no saints upon earth? Surely, then, to have a title is not the same thing as to be in possession; and all the texts which can be brought to prove that faith is our title *to be* justified, fail to prove of themselves that it involves in it our justification, unless indeed children are Christians without baptism because their parents were Christians, and Saints are in heaven before death because they are fit for heaven. If, I say, the texts in question do but show that faith is our sole title to be justified, they prove nothing about any thing else. A title to a certain benefit is still a title, whether the benefit has been conferred or not. It does not cease to be the title because we have the benefit, nor is it less of a title because we have not yet received it. It is not at all bound to past, present, or future. It is that *on* which we once received, or *by* which we now hold, or *for* which we are still claiming the benefit, as the case may be. If, then, the texts in question merely say that he who has faith has a right to the benefit of redemption, they merely say (which is indeed much, but is all they do say) that he who believes-*shall* to a certainty at some time and by some means be justified. And that they say this, and no more, is plain from those texts to which

reference has already been made. For instance, "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved;" a promise is given, but the how, the when, the where, the by what, these particulars are by the very form of the proposition left uncertain. Time is not mentioned, nor mode;—but a *promise* given, that it *shall* be.

But, on the other hand, if we say that faith is the mode or the time as well as the title, we may as well say, too, that it is the *Author* of our justification. We may as well say it supersedes Christ's Atonement as a meritorious cause, as Baptism as an instrument. And so again of the text; it says, that many shall *come* from the East and West, and *sit* down in the kingdom of heaven. Is coming the same as sitting down? coming stands for faith, sitting down for baptism; coming is our title, sitting down is possession. Coming goes before, leads to, sitting down; but it is not sitting down. A title is one thing, and possession is another. And the same might be shown of the other texts which are commonly cited in the question.

2. This becomes still more clear, on considering that whereas *faith* is in some passages made the means of gaining acceptance, *prayer* is, in other places, spoken of as the means; and, moreover, prayer is evidently the *expression* of faith, so that whatever is true of prayer is true of faith also. Now it is too plain to insist upon, that, though success is certainly promised to prayer in the *event*, yet the *time* of succeeding is *not* promised, and so far from it being immediate, we are expressly told to pray again and again, to continue instant in

prayer, *in order to succeed.* For instance, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Here salvation is, as it were, put in our own power; to *hear* the invitation is our sufficient title for coming; to *pray* for the gift is the sure and certain means of receiving it. Most true; but does the word *seek* imply one act, and one only? does it imply that we gain at once what we ask for? The contrary: we are elsewhere told to "*strive* to enter in at the strait gate, for many will *seek* to enter in," that is, seek *without* striving, "and shall not be able [1]." Again; "He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint [2]." It is not one act of prayer, then, or two, but a course and continuance of prayer, which entitle us to God's mercy; and therefore, in like manner, it is not one act of faith which justifies us, or two acts, but to live in faith and to walk in faith is our title; and to *begin* to have faith is to enter the road leading, infallibly leading, to justification, by a series of events or conditions, of which faith is the first and sole on our part. I say that the message "Believe, and thou shalt have," "Call, and thou shalt be saved," as little imply that one act of faith, one call, is all that is requisite, as "Ask, and it shall be given you," implies that we can gain answers to prayer at the mere willing. Sometimes, doubtless, God mercifully answers upon one prayer, and sometimes He justifies on one act of faith; but I am speaking of what we have a right to gather from such passages; and I say, that all

[1] Luke xiii. 24. [2] Luke xviii. 1.

they can prove is this, that he who has faith has a *promise* from God that he *shall*, shall in God's own way, in God's own time, shall certainly and surely in the event, be justified; that, as he who begins to pray will sooner or later obtain, so he who believes shall, unless he "draw back," be justified.

3. But this is made a matter of certainty by the *instances* which we find given us in the New Testament of justification by faith. We find that faith was not thought enough, but was made to lead on to other conditions. A man was not thought to have all, to have obtained, on believing, but to have a title whereby to find and obtain. For instance, even in a case which admits of being otherwise interpreted in some respects, so much as this is certain. Cornelius was a special instance of *faith*; but did this faith suffice to make him a justified Christian? No; it did but give him a *title* to it. It moved the God of mercy to work miracles for him. There was this circumstance, special and remarkable in his case, that the first spiritual gift was not given through baptism, but still it was not given at once upon his faith. So far from it, he had to send to an Apostle *before* it was given.

Take again the instance of St. Paul himself. By faith he obeyed the heavenly vision, and went into Damascus, and waited. But he *had* to wait, he was not justified. He waited three days—he prayed; then Ananias was sent; and *he* said, "Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins*, calling on the Name of the Lord[1]." To believe, to confess, to pray, to call,

[1] Acts xxii. 16.

were the sufficient *title* for the gift; but baptism was the instrument of receiving it. St. Paul having faith, was sure, in God's great mercy, eventually of receiving baptism, but not at once.

Again, consider the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch. "Faith cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of God." This was fulfilled in his case. He read the Prophet Isaiah concerning Christ's atoning sufferings. He heard Philip preaching on the sacred text. He had faith in Christ. He had a *title* to justification; but he was baptized in order to *receive* it. Hear his own words declaring it. "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized[1]?" You see, baptism was the great end which he was seeking; why, except that it conveyed the gift of life? Would it have been rational to have been so earnest for a dead ordinance, for a mere outward rite? especially since now he had heard, and had believed. Would he have asked about "*hindrances*" to a mere outward rite, when he had already obtained the inward gift? No, he sought baptism because it was worth seeking. And Philip treats it as such: he says, "Thou mayest, *if*." He puts a condition. Men do not put conditions before worthless things. A condition is a price;—men do not buy nothing with something. The Eunuch was going to *receive a gift*, else there had been no delay, no scrutiny, no engagement. Now what *was* the condition? "If thou *believest* with all thine heart, thou mayest." If thou believest. "And he answered and said, I believe that

[1] Acts viii. 36.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Faith, then, was the *title*, the sole *title*. "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him." At length it was finished. The deed was done—the gift was given—justification was accomplished—and therefore, "when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." He did not take him away before; He did not think it enough for Philip to preach. Philip preached *and* baptized; and then he was caught away. Had he but preached, and not baptized, and the Eunuch still had had faith, then doubtless, in God's great mercy and good providence, another messenger from Him would have baptized him; the Eunuch would not have gone without baptism; he would not have been frustrated of the fruit of his faith; only he would not have had it so soon. He would still have had the title, the claim to baptism. But God "finished the work, and cut it short in righteousness [1]." He justified the believing soul through water; and then Philip, his instrument, was caught away, and the Christian "went on his way rejoicing."

One more instance: St. Paul said to the jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,"—and then he and Silas "spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house [2]." Here, then, "faith came by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Accordingly, the *promise* was unto him and his; and what next? Let St. Peter tell us what,

[1] Rom. ix. 28. [2] Acts xvi. 30—34.

on the day of Pentecost. "The *promise*," he says, "is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call;" and therefore, "be *baptized*." This was the issue—be baptized—why? "for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." What St. Peter said to the Jews, that St. Paul did to the jailor, or rather St. Silas did it; for St. Paul says of himself, that he was not sent to baptize, but to preach the Gospel. *He* did not baptize, because so great a gift was baptism, that the Apostles wished to avoid the chance of seeming to baptize in their own name, and of seeming to be setting up *themselves* for the meritorious means through which men are saved. St. Paul says, then, "I thank my God that I baptized *none* of you," except one or two whom he mentions, "lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name[1]." As water is a feeble element, so the minister chosen was the feeblest vessel in the Church, to show that all was of God. Accordingly, the Apostle generally had with him some friend, who, while a companion and comfort to him, administered those offices which he did not take upon himself. Philip was a deacon, and baptized; St. Paul was an Apostle, and did not baptize; and, therefore, I say, it is more likely, in the case before us, that Silas baptized the jailor, and not St. Paul. However, baptized he was and all his; and then, and not before, took place in him the same inward change which happened to the Eunuch, "he *rejoiced*, believing in God with all his

[1] 1 Cor. i. 14, 15.

house." He had *believed* before baptism, but he did not *rejoice* before baptism—he rejoiced after baptism. Men rejoice when they have *found* what they seek. Both the noble Ethiopian and the humble jailor rejoiced on their being *baptized.* Faith gave a title: baptism gave possession. Faith procured them what nothing else would procure, and baptism conveyed it.

Enough has been said to explain in what sense faith is what nothing else is, and does what nothing else can do. He who has the means of hearing the Gospel, and believes in it heartily, has not a means of gaining, but a title to receive justification; he has within him a warrant, not that God has justified him, but that He will justify him. And this was so fully understood and received by the early Church of Christ, that, supposing a person, who was candidate and under preparation for baptism, happened to die before its administration, it was believed that that person on his death was put by God's mercy into that state of salvation, into which he would have entered by baptism. Or, again, suppose a person was martyred for his faith and not baptized, then, too, his salvation was considered to be secured in like manner without baptism. For where a man has true faith, Christ, we humbly trust, would rather work a miracle for his justification, than deprive him of that which He graciously considers as his right. He that hath begun a good work in us, will perform it in some way or other and bring it to perfection. He will, by His providence, create Churches and Ministers of Baptism round about the souls whom He visits; or He will lead them from Ethiopia to Jerusalem, and send Philip to meet them;

or He will speak in dreams by His Angel, and send unto Joppa for Peter; or in a prison He will even make a spring of water gush forth miraculously from the rock at an Apostle's voice; or He will, if all other means are suspended, reconcile the soul to Him without the appointed ordinance at the moment of dissolution. In some way or other, where He gives faith, He will open a way for saving grace. For whom He foreknows, them He predestinates; and whom He predestinates, them He calls; and whom He calls, them He justifies; and whom He justifies, them He glorifies.

And now it is plain what a consolatory light these considerations throw upon the present disordered state of Christendom. I trust there is no presumption in thus interpreting Scripture, and in thus judging of the state of things which we see; and if not, we may be thankful in being able to do so. It is most true, then, and never to be explained away, that the grace of the Gospel is lodged in a divinely appointed body, and spreads from *it*. It diffuses itself like leaven over the world, according to the parable, by a continuity and progression; not found here, and found there, in a detached isolated way, but here, and there, and wherever it is, as portions of one whole. As well may the branches of a tree be strewed on the earth, and the trunk be in the ground, and the leaves be whirled in the air, and the fruit be at the bottom of the stream, and yet all be one whole living tree, as the Church be divided. It is impossible. None who are external to it are included in it; it is quite a truism to say this. Neither faith nor any thing else can make that to be,

which is not. Wishing will not serve instead of coming, and faith cannot serve in the place of baptism. None are justified but those who are grafted into the justified body; and faith is not an instrument of grafting, but a title to be grafted. It is baptism, "whereby, as an instrument, they that receive it rightly," that is, by faith, "are grafted into the Church." And *with* the Church go all its privileges; and on *communion* with it depends the *inflowing into* the soul of its privileges. He who never has entered into the Church has not the privileges; he who has seceded from it, or sinned grievously in it, or is born in a schismatical branch or heretical sect, to him the privileges are suspended. There are great numbers, then, all about us, vast multitudes, who, for one reason or other, through their own fault or the fault of their fathers, are in a position which fails of the enjoyment of the privileges of regeneration. The power of the Spirit, the cleanness and lustre of the new creature, the intercourse with heaven, the light of God's countenance, the fulness of justification, are not participated by these masses of men, at least according to the provisions of the Gospel covenant. But in spite of this, we may humbly, yet confidently say, that where there is true faith, there justification shall be; there it is promised, it is due, it is coming, somehow, somewhile. Whether, as the Saints of the Old Testament waited, and were not gifted with Gospel justification till Christ's first coming, these faithful souls will be received into the glory and grace of the Church at His second coming; or whether they enter into the kingdom upon death; or whether, by an extra-

ordinary dispensation unknown to us and to themselves, they receive the gift here; or whether in this world their eyes shall at length be opened, and the Church revealed to them, as the true treasure-house of grace and home of refuge to all believers, and they be led to seek it, and renounce the sect of their birth or of their choice,—any how, they have a title; if they call, they shall be answered,—if they knock, it shall be opened to them. *Who* have this true faith we cannot tell, any more than *when* God rewards it; no, nor what measure of assistance, what power of spiritual influence He gives to those, who nevertheless, like the Jews, have not the peculiar gifts and endowments of the Covenant of the Gospel. Yet it is a great comfort to believe that God's favour is not limited to the bounds of His heritage, but that, in the Church or out of the Church, every one that calleth on the Name of the Lord with a pure and perfect heart shall be saved.

And thus the possession of the Holy Scriptures is an inestimable gift in a country, to those who use it rightly, whether they belong to the Church or not, and so far we may well rejoice in their circulation; not that possession justifies, or reading, or knowing; not that the Bible is our *religion*, according to the strange phrase, which however has, alas, too true a meaning in fact; but the Bible is the means, through God's secret help, towards faith, and faith is the means towards justification. And as reading does not involve faith, yet is the way to it, so faith, though it does not involve justification, yet is a sure title to it. And thus by reading Scripture, thousands, we may trust, who are

not baptized, yet are virtually catechumens, and in heart and spirit *candidates* for the cleansing Sacrament. Thousands who are in unconscious heresy or unwilling schism, still are, through faith, in the state of Cornelius, when his prayers and alms went up before God. Thousands who are obliged to partake of the elements of Holy Communion unconsecrated, or administered with doubtful rites, yet have that within them which the fault or ignorance of the minister cannot take away,—a preparation of heart. Thousands who are in branches of the Church which profane men have stripped of holy ordinances, though the two Sacraments themselves remain to it, may through their faith receive *in* the Sacraments those graces besides, which were wont to be given through those lost ordinances. And thousands, who have been born and trained in separation, become, through their faith, divinely enlightened to seek and to join that One Holy and Catholic Body, in which God's presence abides. Such is the power of faith, not to disparage ordinances, but to secure graces.

Lastly, at the same time it is plain, and the face of Christendom shows it, how mournful is that spiritual state, even though happy in the end, in which, contrary to Christ's will, faith is disjoined from justification. Christ willed that justification should come at once upon faith through the Sacrament of Baptism. Satan has so disordered Christendom, that numbers perhaps have faith without as yet having justification; an interval, not of days, as in Cornelius's case, but of years, nay, perhaps of a life, lying between the two. We see the consequence of such an anomalous state all around us.

How miserable is the inconsistency of even our good men! how excellent in some points, how very faulty in others! How clear and edifying seems the faith of many who yet are very poorly advanced in sanctification! how is faith (strange to say) combined with profaneness, or with pride, or with despondency, or with headstrong blindness to the truth! What does all this show but that God's Spirit indeed is striving among us, but that the Church of the living God is hardly here; that beams of His favour are shed on us, but that the Sun of Righteousness is hid; that He has hid His face; that we have aids, but not Gospel graces; signs and evidences of mercy, but not justification; faith producing such fruits as it best may in the wide world, in a wild uncertain way, just as sweet plants might flower, and rich trees bear, on the outside of Eden.

But let *us* bless and praise God, my brethren, if He has placed *us*, as we trust, *within* the bounds of His kingdom; let us pray Him that we may avail ourselves of this inestimable privilege; let us pray Him to bring all others into it, to give light where He gives faith, and to join to the city of the Living God all those whose faces are turned thitherward.

# SERMON XIII.

## JUDAISM OF THE PRESENT DAY.

(EASTER.)

HEB. xi. 13.

*"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."*

WHAT St. Paul here plainly states is a paradox to many persons of this day, viz. that any should have faith, and yet should not have the promise. Yet the whole of this chapter is about the faith of the old fathers; and again and again in the course of it does the Apostle deny them the object of their faith. "They died in *faith*," yet "not having received the promises," being "persuaded of them, and embracing them," yet only "seeing them afar off," and "confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau:" concerning what? "about things to come." Again he says, "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise." And observe in the text the strong words, "persuaded of them, and *embraced them;*" in modern language, their faith *apprehended* the promise, yet

they had it not. It is one thing, then, to have faith, another thing to receive the promise through faith. Faith does not involve in itself the receipt of the promise.

It is equally clear *what* the promise is which is spoken of,—regeneration. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel,"—thus was it announced in the prophets,—"After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My *law* in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." Again, "I will pour My *Spirit* upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring." And again, "A *new heart* also will I give you, and a *new spirit* will I put within you . . . And I will put My *Spirit* within you." Accordingly, when our Lord was going away, He said to His Apostles, "Behold, I send the *promise* of My Father upon you." Again, "Wait for the *promise* of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me." And hence, when the multitude asked St. Peter what to do, he said, "Repent, and be *baptized* . . . for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the *Holy Ghost;* for the *promise* is unto you, and to your children." And St. Paul, in like manner, says that we receive "the *promise* of the *Spirit* through *faith*." Soon after he speaks of "the *promise* by *faith* of Jesus Christ[1]." Elsewhere he speaks of our being "sealed with that Holy *Spirit* of *promise*."

It appears, then, that faith gains the promise, and that the promise is the great gift of the Spirit; and moreover (from the instance of the old Fathers, spoken

[1] Jer. xxxi. 33. Isa. xliv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4; ii. 38, 39. Gal. iii. 14. 22. Eph. i. 13.

of in the chapter from which the text is taken), that it is not the same thing to have faith, so as to embrace and apprehend the promise, and to enjoy it; that faith is a condition of Christ's grace, and yet not a token. A man may have true faith, and still not yet be justified; he may have a faith for justification, he may be ordained unto justification, yet the time of justification not yet have arrived; or, rather, though justification is not yet his, still in God's secret counsels he may be ordained unto it.

This doctrine seems to me a very consolatory one at this time, when so many persons have not, or have not certainly, the grant of justifying grace. When we consider that baptism of water is solemnly connected with regeneration by our Lord, and that such numbers among us either are not baptized at all, or in such a way, or by such persons, or under such circumstances, as to make it very doubtful whether it is real efficacious baptism or no, it is a great consolation to believe, that though they are *not* new-born and justified, yet they may have faith, as the old saints had, who were not justified in the Spirit; and that if they have faith, even though they have not Christian justification to the day of their death, they are but in the condition of the old believers; and He who allowed the latter to die without receiving the promise, He who justified martyrs of old time, not through baptism, but in their streaming blood, may at the moment of death, or before death, should it so please Him, justify them too, even though unbaptized, in His own secret way. This, of course, allows no one to slight baptism when he can

obtain it, nor to quench the whispers of grace within him, suggesting to him the necessity of baptism; nor does it warrant us rashly to assert that this or that unbaptized person has true faith, much less that he is justified; nor to suppose that such persons as are in a measure accepted without baptism, would not have a much higher acceptance with it; but it comforts us with the thought, that *if* a man has faith, he has or will have justification. Sooner would an Angel descend from heaven, or an Apostle be provided, than one, whose prayers and alms had gone up before God, should not, at one time or another, receive the gift. Almighty God has declared the immutability of His counsel to the heirs of promise; that whom He calls, them He justifies; whom He justifies, them He glorifies. The when and the where are with Him. He will do it in His time;—as, according to His will, sooner or later, He takes from earth and brings into paradise those whom He has justified, so, sooner and later, does He translate from the world into the Church, through His Spirit, those whom He has called by faith. But it is not for us "to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power[1]."

Now there can be no doubt that Christ meant no length of time to interfere between faith and the cleansing and justifying new birth. A long and dreary interval had intervened in past ages, but that was over. St. Peter's words are sufficient to show this, "Repent

[1] Acts i. 7.

*and* be baptized," or our Lord's, "He that believeth *and* is baptized shall be saved[1]." Sufficient too is the history of Cornelius, to whom regeneration was conveyed by a series of miracles; and still, nevertheless, in Cornelius's instance, some interval there was; and thus in the case of Cornelius and of the Jews we have specimens given us, at least in kind, of that long and miserable delay which so often occurs now, when the times of the Law seem to have returned, and men believe and embrace what they die without possessing.

Now if we have in various ways gone back unwittingly to the state of the Law; if without our fault, being falsely educated, or for other reasons, we have rested on faith solely, in an unscriptural way, and neglected God's ordinances; if we have remained without baptism or have not been confirmed, or have not been frequent at the Lord's Table, or have fallen away to religious bodies where that sacred rite cannot be administered, or in any way have been deprived of that full circle of privileges which Holy Church dispenses; if we have thus been at disadvantage in one or other way, and yet are not without faith; if, I say, we have fallen into a Jewish *state*, it might be expected that we should display also a Jewish *character of mind*, and *course of conduct*, and should exemplify in ourselves that paradox, which we so wonder at when recorded of the Jews in the text, of embracing promises which we do not or do but partially enjoy;—and we are, I think, in such circumstances, as I now proceed to show.

[1] Acts ii. 38. Matt. xvi. 16.

If the Jews had not received the promised Spirit, it is not wonderful that they did not show forth the special fruits of that Spirit which was promised. Now the office of the promised Spirit was to mortify the flesh, to write the law in our hearts, to enable us to fulfil the righteousness of the law, to pour into our hearts "that most excellent gift of love," to enable us to do works acceptable to God, and to be conformed in body, soul, and spirit to Him. The Jews were aided by God's grace (else they could not have had faith), but they were not inhabited by it; they did good actions, they had holy desires and tempers, but they had not that regenerate life within them which Christians are promised. I am not speaking of this or that highly-favoured saint, but of the people; they were at best great now, and little again; in some points high, and in others low; with one grace, and not another. Some graces they had, because they had faith; all they had not, because they had not the Indwelling Spirit. This is seen in some of the instances of faith given by St. Paul in the chapter immediately before us. For instance, he says, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not;" and what is still more to the purpose, he refers to Samson and Jephthah as examples of true and acceptable faith; yet is the history of these men, particularly of Samson, *consistent* with their faith? Nay, did we possess merely the Old Testament, and knew not of St. Paul's inspired comment upon it, should we say that Samson had faith at all? See what it is to be in that middle state between faith and justification of the Spirit, between title and possession.

And hence it has been the belief of many, that the old Fathers did not, after departing this life, at once enjoy the blessed rest of a justified people, till Christ came, and, having overcome death and risen again, gave them to be justified by that faith, with which they had so long waited for Him, and to become members of His spiritual kingdom.

Again, the Apostle says, "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land." Now this is said of that people "whose carcases fell in the wilderness," and who could not enter into the promised land: —why? "because of *unbelief*," as St. Paul tells us in the same Epistle. Here, you see, even their faith failed them. How different is it with the faith of Christ's disciples! "Simon, Simon," said our Lord to St. Peter, "behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith *fail not*[1]." Peter had before this been commended for his faith, and now it was in jeopardy; but in truth that faith was not from flesh and blood, it was attended with the beginnings of those Gospel gifts which the Jews had not; and which are "without repentance," for they are as inward habits, and He who begins a good work in us, in His mercy carries it forward to an end.

Again; St. Paul, in his own history, gives us an account of the state of the Jews, whose faith was not supported, strengthened, spiritualized by the gift of inward justification. "The law is spiritual, but I am

[1] Luke xxii. 31, 32.

carnal, sold under sin; for that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" How different this from St. John's description of the true regeneration; "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His *seed* remaineth in him"—what is that seed but the Spirit?—"His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God[1]."

Such is the case of those who have faith, yet are not yet justified with the grace of the Gospel; and may we not, with all reverence to so great and holy a prophet, say this in a measure even of David? Surely it is no irreverence to speak of what he seems to have been in the flesh, if we think that now he is with Christ in the spirit, in the lot of the blessed, and the light of the justified, though in his earthly life the fulness of that gift had not yet been accorded to him. Surely it is no irreverence to speak of what he was before he had received the promise, now that he has received it, more than to speak of what St. Paul was when he was Saul. Nay, far less, if we may talk of less where there is none. For St. Paul was even under God's displeasure before he was Christian; but David was the man after God's own heart, and an inspired prophet. His Psalms are our portion even to this day. We reverence him as one who was favoured on earth, and destined to be more favoured in heaven. We see in him much actually secured, though we allow that much was but in rudi-

[1] Rom. vii. 14, 15. 24. 1 John iii. 9.

ment. And therefore even we, without blame may notice, and profitably consider, the imperfections of holy David's life in this point of view, viz. as showing the state in which men are found when they have faith, but have not yet received the promise. Consider, then, the high excellences of his character; view him leading the worshippers to the house of God; think of his zeal for God's service; his lofty devotional spirit; the tenderness and the piety of his thoughts; his dutifulness to God's commands; his humility, simplicity, generosity, nobleness, and affectionateness; and then, on the other hand, view him in those particular passages of his history which inspiration records for our instruction, and you will, I think, see by the instance even of so great a light, what the case was with the multitude, who, however inferior to him in gifts and graces, had faith, yet had not yet Gospel justification.

And now, after these remarks on the state of the Jews, let me ask you to turn to the present state of this country, and to say whether numbers are not, by their own confession, in that same Jewish state; and therefore whether it is not true of them, as of the Jews, in a certain sense, that, granting they have faith (and it is a consolation to believe they have), yet they are at best, in matter of fact, in that intermediate, provisional, unspiritual state in which *we* view them, who hold that the Sacraments of the Church are, over and above faith, necessary for justification.

If, I say, justification is conveyed through Baptism and the other sacred rites, those who reject the latter, either have not received, or have lost the former. But

on the other hand, if true faith gives men a title to be justified, then they will be justified in God's own time, provided their faith endure. Such, then, being the state of good men who, from involuntary ignorance are in dissent, or in other grievous ecclesiastical error, do they not, I say, stand exactly in the state of the Jews? Certainly; for the Jews had faith, yet had not yet received the promise of the Spirit, which is Christian justification. Well then, I repeat, if this be so, we should expect that their *opinions and lives* would actually *show* that they *were* in a Jewish state. This is what I am now insisting on. I have said what the state of the Jews was, moral and spiritual, and now I am going to show that just in that state, and in no other, according to their own confession, are Christians now, who neglect the justifying ordinances of the Church. And,

1. Great numbers absolutely confess and believe, that the Christian ordinances are just the same as the Jewish. They *own* themselves to be in the state in which the Church lay before Christ suffered and rose again. They distinctly assert that Baptism is no more than circumcision. Thus they bear witness against themselves. They do not look for any high mysterious gift in Holy Communion, but they think it the same as the Jewish Passover; each, as they think, figures our Lord's passion; the difference being that, in the one case, it was yet to come, in the other it is past. The Passover prefigured, the Lord's Supper commemorates it; the Jews looked forward, Christians look back. This is what they hold. They *claim* to be in the state of the

Jews, in the state of those who had faith without Gospel justification.

2. Next, let it be observed, that they consider justification to be nothing more than God's *accounting* them righteous, which is just what justification was to the Jews. Justification *is* God's accounting a man righteous; yes, but it is, in the case of the Christian, something more; it is God's *making* him righteous too. As beasts live, and men live, and life is life, and yet life is not the same in man and beast; but in man consists in the presence of a soul; so in somewhat the same way Jews were justified, and Christians are justified, and in the case of both justification means God's accounting men righteous; but in Christians it means not only an accounting, but it involves a making; so that as the presence of a soul is the mode in which God gives man life, so the presence of the Holy Spirit is the mode in which God gives him righteousness. This is that promise of the Spirit of life, because of which the Gospel is called "a ministration of righteousness." But the multitude of religious professors at this day whom I speak of, do not admit this; they even protest against the notion. They think justification to be something, not inward, but merely outward; that is, they acknowledge themselves, they claim to be, in the state of the Jews, and though of course they contend that they *are* justified, yet they own that their own justification is not more than an outward or imputative justification. There is no room here for difference in the use of words, and mutual misunderstandings. If we maintain that they have not inward justification, it is not as if they maintained that

they had, as if they aspired to it; it is no more than they allow as well as we. They only contend they are justified in *their* sense, that is, in such sense as we allow they may be, if they have true faith; I mean in that sense in which the Jews were justified, who died, not having received the promise.

3. Again. They lay an especial stress upon *faith* for salvation, and comparatively neglect love; they put faith *before* love. Now, is not this in so many words to assent to us when we place them with the Jews? For, whereas faith is the essence of *all* religion, and of the Jewish inclusive, love is the great grace of Christianity; Christianity is religion, and something more; and the spirit of love is faith, and something more. *Christian* faith is faith developed into love, it lives in love, and love is greater than faith, because it is its Gospel perfection, according to the Apostle's declaration, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." "The just shall live by faith," is a Jewish truth as well as a Christian; "Love is the fulfilling of the Law," is Christian only. When these persons say that faith is all in all, what do they but allow that they are on a level with the Jews, —with those who had indeed faith, but had not yet attained the Christian promise?

4. Again. The Jews, as I have said, had the will without the power; whereas Christ has unfettered the will, and enabled it to obey. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead," He says. "The Law of the Spirit of Life hath made me free from the law

of sin and death[1]." Christ, by fulfilling the Law for us, has given us also power to fulfil it after our measure, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The very test of a mature Christian, of a true saint, is consistency in all things. Now, is it not a very remarkable fact, that the bodies of men I speak of unhesitatingly appropriate that melancholy seventh chapter to the Romans, to which I have been referring, and claim it as being accurately descriptive of their own state? Nay, so strongly and earnestly, that sometimes they will even say that no one is, in their sense, a true Christian, who does not claim it also;—and why? because they say that if a man does not find *his own experience* bear witness to the truth of the Apostle's statement in that chapter, he cannot possess that state of mind which they consider essential to all believers. O true confession to the misery of having faith without inward justification! They make the test of a true Christian to be, not spiritual perfection, but confession of sin. Thus they glory, I will not say in their shame, but in their misfortune. They are in bondage; they are carnal, sold under sin; they confess it; they are like the Jews, and they call this a spiritual mind, and say that none are true Christians but those who are in a similar state. Do I mean to promise men that they shall be at once and altogether free from their natural bondage if they follow Christ in His Church? Do I mean to say that we do not, as well as the Jews, in a certain sense recognize those miserable cries of human nature as our

[1] Eph. v. 14. Rom. viii. 2.

own? No, but I mean to say, that *so far* as we feel them, we too are in an inferior Jewish state; that there *is* a higher state, that we are bound to seek after it, and that we can attain to it. But the multitudes I speak of, *own* that their peculiar and intended condition, that state to which they give the name of spiritual, is one in which the Spirit has no power. Such is the consequence of starting with faith rightly, but stopping short of the Sacraments wrongly.

5. Once more. There is one virtue which of old time good men especially had not. Indulgences were allowed the Jews on account of the hardness of their hearts. Divorce of marriage was allowed them. More wives than one at once were not denied them. If there is one grace in which Christianity stands in especial contrast to the old religion, it is that of purity. Christ was born of a Virgin; He remained a virgin; His beloved disciple was a virgin; He abolished polygamy and divorce; and He said that there were those who for the kingdom of heaven's sake would be even as He. Now, as the Apostle says, "Every man hath his proper gift of God." I accept the word; I do not outstep it; but as surely as each has his gift, so, according to the Apostle, some have *this* gift. But now, my brethren, who will question that the way of the world at present is to deny that there is such a gift? I am not objecting here, I am not wondering, that all men have it not; but what I wonder at is, that *none* have it; and I ask, does not this, if there were no other reason, show, that we have fallen back into a Jewish state? It is now a recognized principle with the world, that there can be no certainty of

holiness except in married life; and that celibacy is all but a state of sin. Nay, so far has this gone, that some of the greatest masters of the doctrine of faith without love and sacraments, have actually sanctioned bigamy in particular cases, and advocated polygamy in writing. Too well then does that religion, which they promulgated, bear witness against itself, that, though faith still be among its followers, which I am far from denying, and have comfort in thinking, yet it is but the faith of Jews, who had a law in their members warring against the law of their mind, and who died indeed in faith, but without having received the promise.

To conclude, though it is our Church's blessedness to have withstood the torrent of that error to which I have been referring, yet it could not be expected that her individual members should have kept themselves free from it. And in proportion as the acts of individuals can counteract her own intentions, so far doubtless we have suffered as others have, and in no slight degree. It is our business, instead of exalting ourselves over others, to repent of our own sins, and to try to escape from the disadvantages under which we find ourselves after all. Especially should we turn our thoughts to the consideration of Holy Communion, which in ancient times was used in many or most places to be celebrated daily, but now is celebrated commonly but three or four times a year. If that holy ordinance be the continual life of the Church, if the Jews "did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead," but if any man "eat of this bread he shall live for ever[1]," is it wonderful that those of us who relin-

[1] John vi. 51.

quish this Gospel gift, and rest in our faith for salvation, should fall back into a state like the Jews? Is it wonderful that we who are the children of promise should not enjoy the promise, seeing we will not accept it; seeing we think it enough to believe that we already have it, or though God offers it, will not put out our hand to take it? Is it wonderful that we have no command over ourselves, when we do not come to Christ, "that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood?" Is it wonderful that we are so inconsistent and variable, when we will not seek of Him such daily sustenances of grace as He offers to us?—when we do not pray to Him daily, or seek His house daily,—that day by day we may walk with Him, and not after our own hearts? Is it wonderful that we have no love, when we neglect altogether that great ordinance whereby love is nurtured, abstinence and fasting?

We cannot hinder others thus acting; we cannot change the course of things, nor heal what is sick, nor bind up what is broken, at our will. But we can act for ourselves, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear; and, while we so act, they may oppose us, but, through God's grace, they will at length be moved to follow us, till at length He will fulfil in them "all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power."

# SERMON XIV.

## THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE APOSTLES.

(EASTER.)

MARK ix. 38, 39.

*"And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and he followeth not us; and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me."*

PERSONS who choose their religion for themselves, or who wander about from one communion of Christians to another at their will, often urge upon us who wish to be disciples of the One Faith, which was once delivered to the saints, this passage of Scripture. They say that Christians may follow strange teachers, who come in their way, because our Saviour did not allow St. John to hinder the stranger mentioned in the text from casting out devils in our Saviour's Name. St. John came to Christ, and told Him that he and the other Apostles had fallen in with a man who, though he wrought miracles, yet did not follow the Apostles, and that they in consequence had forbidden him. To

which our Lord answered, "Forbid him not." Therefore they argue, as the Apostles were not allowed to forbid this stranger, neither may the Church forbid strange teachers and preachers; that all have a right to preach, whether they follow the Church or no, so that they do but preach in the Name of Jesus, without any molestation. Such is the objection, and I propose now to consider it.

Now I deny that the case in the text is at all parallel to that which it is brought to justify, as a few remarks will show.

1. First, then, this man was not preaching; he was casting out devils. This is a great difference—he was doing a miracle. Our Saviour says so expressly; "There is no man which shall do a *miracle* in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me." Now any one can preach; not every one can cast out devils. Very few can cast out devils; nay, at first sight, it would seem that none but a servant of God can cast out devils. *Man* cannot overcome the devil, Christ only overcomes him. If a man cast out a devil, he has power from Christ; and if he has power from Christ, he must have a commission from Christ; and who shall forbid one, to whom God gives commission to do miracles, from doing them? That would be fighting against God. But, on the other hand, many a man may preach without being sent from God and having power from Him; for Christ expressly warns us against false prophets, and He says that "many shall come in His Name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many." It does not follow, then, because we must not prohibit

those who come with a Divine commission from working miracles, that therefore we may not prohibit those who do not come with a commission from preaching.

2. But it may be said, "The effects of preaching *are* a miracle. A good preacher converts persons, that is, he casts out devils from the hearts of those whom he changes from sin to holiness; and this is a miracle. This he could not do without power from God. Therefore he is sent from God, and therefore he ought not to be forbidden. The question turns on this, whether his preaching is with power or not, whether he *is* influential, whether he touches the hearts of his hearers. If he does, no matter whether he follows the Apostles or not. For the Apostles were but messengers from God, and he is a messenger from God because he is able to do God's work, and one messenger need not follow another messenger? What is Paul? or what is Apollos? He is as little bound to follow the Apostles, as the Apostles to follow him: he has just as much right to forbid the Church to preach, as the Church to forbid him. And since we may not forbid him, we may follow him." This is what is said.

I answer, that though such a person's preaching *were* all that it is said to be, though it did work what looks like a miracle, this would not prove that he came from God; for the false prophets against whom our Saviour warns us, are to do "signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect[1]." I do not suppose that they will work miracles such as God's servants work, but what seem to be such, what are sufficiently like

[1] Mark xiii. 22.

miracles to perplex those who see them; yet these prophets, of course, are not to be listened to. And, therefore, if a preacher, who kept apart from the Church, were said to do much good to the souls of others, I should very much rejoice to hear the report of it, but I should pause and require many things to be decided first, before I could be sure that good really was done; or, if so, that it was his doing. What seems good, is often not good. Persons who hear preaching often take up a serious life for a time, and then get tired of it. Or they profess a great deal more than they feel, and think themselves more in earnest than they are; or they take that to be true religion which is not; or they change one bad state of mind for another, and account certain feelings, or tempers, or opinions, or doings to be pleasing to God, which are not so. For all these reasons it is not at all an easy matter to determine that the self-appointed preachers in question do really convert the hearts of men, that is, *do* cast out devils, do work miracles, as they say they do.

3. But again; even if sinners *are* converted upon such a one's preaching, this would not show that *he* did the work, or, at least, that he had more than a share in it. The miracle after all might belong to the Church, not to him. If sinners are converted, it is partly in consequence of their having been baptized, and perhaps not owing to the preacher in question more than to any other accident. Men are touched, and roused to think of religion continually, by a variety of striking accidents, which God uses indeed, which He overrules for good, but which do not therefore necessarily come *from*

Him. Supposing a man falls into sin, and that rouses his conscience, fills him with remorse, makes him fly to God for pardon, leads him to repentance and newness of life; all this comes from his having committed this particular sin, whatever it is; but who would say that the *sin* came from God? God forbid; the sin came from the man's own self-will, and God mercifully overruled it to him for good; and, in like manner, God may condescend to overrule the preaching of those who preach at their own will, and not from Him, without countenancing them thereby in so preaching. They are but the *occasion* of the miracle, not the *instrument* of it.

And let it be observed, that persons who take up with new religions, and leave the Church to follow preachers, often grant that they gained their *first* impression *in* the Church. Well, if so, the Church, as they themselves say, has a share in the work wrought in them. The Church did part of the miracle. How many a man, who thinks he is converted by this or that preacher, gains the benefit after all from the parents or the clergymen who have taught him when young, and trained him up in holiness, though he did not profit by their instructions at the time, and who, now that he lives more religiously, ungratefully forgets *them*, and refers it all to some strange preacher, who, at the very farthest, did but put the finishing stroke to the work,—who led him to profit by what he had been already taught, who rekindled what once before was lighted, and who, perhaps, *in* rekindling hurts the flame, so that instead of being pure, serene, and heavenly, it smoulders, and is full of smoke, or blazes and sinks

by fits and starts, or flares wildly and lights a conflagration!

For all these reasons, then, it would seem as if the instance in the text did not apply to persons who teach new religions now: we may forbid them, first, because they do not work miracles, as the man in the text did; and next, even though they seemed in particular cases to convert the souls of their hearers, which *would* be a miracle, it would be very difficult to prove that they really have done this, both because what seems conversion often is not real conversion in spirit and truth; and, again, because though it be real conversion, yet, perhaps, *they* are not the doers of it, but the Church itself before them. To proceed;—

1. It should be observed, then, that if our Saviour says on this occasion, "He that is not against us is on our part," yet elsewhere He says, "He that is not with Me is against Me[1]." The truth is, while a system is making way against an existing state of things, help of any kind advances it; but when it is established, the same kind of professed help tells against it. Before the Gospel was received, those who did not oppose the Apostles actually aided them; when it was received, the very same parties interfered with them. Let us consider when it was that our Saviour spoke the words in the text. It was at a time when there was *no* Church, when He had not yet set up His Church; we have no warrant, then, for saying, that because men might work in Christ's name, without following the Apostles, before

[1] Matt. xii. 30.

He had built up His Church, and had made them the foundations of it, therefore such persons may do so lawfully since. He did not set up His Church, and the Apostles in it, till after His resurrection. When He spoke to St. John in the text, He had not given to St. John and the rest their commission; even though the man who cast out devils had no commission, still the Apostles had none either. In this respect he was not inferior to St. John, who, though nearer to Christ, was not as yet His representative. Our Lord had said to St. Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I *will* build My Church[1]," it was still future; but after His resurrection He founded it. Then He said to him, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? feed My lambs, feed My sheep[2]." In like manner He had said to all the Apostles before His resurrection, "Whatsoever ye *shall* bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven;" the time was not yet come; but after it, He said, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you[3]." Then He *did*, what before He promised; henceforth all men must join themselves to the Apostles, which they were not told to do before. Accordingly, we read in the second chapter of the Acts, that those who were converted and baptized, "continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine,"—but not only doctrine, it was not enough to preach and hold the same doctrine as they, but it is added, in the Apostles' "fellowship,"—they "continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship[4]."

[1] Matt. xvi. 18.
[2] John xxi. 15—17.
[3] Matt. xviii. 18. John xx. 21.
[4] Acts ii. 42.

That is, they *followed* the Apostles; and if they had wished to depart from that fellowship, the Apostles would have *forbidden* it, nor would our Lord have said to them then, "Forbid them not."

Accordingly, when the Christians of Corinth went into parties, and set up forms of doctrine of their own, and neglected St. Paul their Apostle, what did he say? did he *forbear* to forbid them? no, he forbade them. And he gave this reason; "What?" he said, "came the word of God out from you[1]?" that is, did the word of God originate with you? And in like manner we may say to those who set up a distinct sect or communion for themselves, Where did you get your knowledge of the truth? You may think the word of God came out from you, but really it came to you *from us;* nor have you received what you teach, as far as it is true, except through that Church which you oppose. That Church made you what you are, as far as you are Christian; and the Church that made you has a right to rule you, and to protest against you when you will not be ruled; she has a right to bid you follow her, and to claim jurisdiction over you, for you are hers; whereas the man in the text who cast out devils had not received the power through the Apostles, and therefore the Apostles had no claim on him to submit to them.

Afterwards, however, the Apostles were the sole channels of grace; and as they were the sole grace-givers under Christ, so they were the sole governors,

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 36.

under Him, of all Christian people; and as they transmitted life, so they claimed obedience. For instance, St. John the Baptist's disciples were believers, religious men, and in God's favour; but, when once the Church was set up, they were obliged to submit to the Church, and to leave the sect, though divinely founded, to which they belonged. We read, in the Acts of the Apostles, of Apollos, "an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures," who was "instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in the spirit, spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John[1]." All this availed, and was accepted with God, till He had set up His Church; but when once it was set up, it availed Apollos nothing, though eloquent, though scriptural, nay, mighty in the Scriptures, though instructed in the Lord's way, though fervent in spirit, though diligent in speaking and teaching, and that boldly, though belonging to the sect and baptized with the baptism of him than whom, among those born of women, no prophet was greater. The Baptist had taught him true doctrine, had taught him that Christ was the Son of God, the Lamb of God, our Atoning Sacrifice; and this Apollos doubtless taught in turn. What did he not teach which persons now teach who call themselves especially Gospel preachers? But as the Baptist submitted to Christ, so must the Baptist's followers submit to Christ's followers, Apollos to the Church. Apollos must not stand apart and so preach Him who taketh

[1] Acts xviii. 24, 25.

away the sin of the world; but he must come to those servants of His, who alone could convey the Spirit; he must come for Christian Baptism, in spite of his knowledge of the Gospel. So Aquila and Priscilla "took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."

Another instance is given us directly after, in the beginning of the nineteenth chapter. St. Paul found certain disciples who had been baptized into John's baptism. He told them this was not enough, and accordingly they were baptized in the *Name* of the Lord Jesus; and were next confirmed, and received the Holy Ghost, even His miraculous gifts. And here I would observe that, for what we know, the very man in the text was one of St. John's disciples, or, if not, one who had received his religious impressions from John; who might lawfully remain as he was, and cast out devils in the Name of Jesus, without joining the Apostles, *till* the Apostles received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and then he was bound to join *them*.

2. And here too we have light thrown upon an expression in the text which I have just used, and which at first sight may seem to need no explanation: "In My Name." Our Lord speaks of those who do miracles "in His Name." Now what is implied in this? At first sight we might think that every one who *uses* the Name of Jesus, and professes to work in and by it, *does* do what he does *in* His *Name*. But this is not so; as is plain from another part of the chapter already quoted, where we read of certain vagabond Jews, "who took upon them to call over

them which had evil spirits the Name of the Lord Jesus." Here, then, were persons who did not follow the Apostles, using the Lord's Name; but could they in consequence be said really to *speak* in His Name? No; for what happened? The evil spirit whom they were attempting to expel, cast it in their teeth, that *they* did *not* follow the Apostles. He answered, "Jesus I know, and *Paul* I know." (I know the Apostle Paul); "but who are ye?" And now, in like manner, the hosts of evil may say to those who preach without being sent, "Jesus I know, and the Church I know; but who are ye?"

Merely, then, to use the Name of Jesus is not enough to constitute what Scripture means by speaking in the Name of the Lord; we must look for that sacred Name, and use that sacred Name, *where* He has lodged it. His Name is a Name of power; we must seek *where* He has lodged His power, if we would speak with power. He has not left His Name at large in the world, but He has lodged His Name in a secure dwelling-place; and we have that Name engraven on us only when we *are in* that dwelling-place. For instance, you recollect the account of the Angel who led the Israelites out of Egypt into the land of promise, how God Almighty speaks of him. "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, and provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for *My Name is in him*[1]."

[1] Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.

The Israelites were to go forward in the Name of the Lord; but it was not enough to use His Name, it was necessary to seek it *where* He had put that awful Name. He had lodged it with the Angel; and to be under the Name's protection, it was necessary to follow the Angel, and obey him. Again, when they came into the promised land, we find still that they might not take up any religion they chose, and use it in God's Name, but that they must seek and use the Name of God where He placed it; for Moses speaks thus to them, "Unto the place which the Lord your God shall *choose* out of all your tribes to put His Name there, even unto *His habitation* shall ye seek, and *thither* thou shalt come. . . . Ye shall *not* do after all the things that we do here this day," that is, in the wilderness; "every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you[1]." The Israelites in the wilderness were somewhat in the condition of Christ's followers before Christ had set up His Church, and put His Name there. Men might use His Name without following His Apostles then; but when once He had put His Name in the Church, then they were bound "unto His habitation to seek, and thither to come." And, that His Name, which was once placed in Shiloh and in Jerusalem, is now named upon the Church, is plain from the prophet Jeremiah, who first says, speaking of Christ, "This is His Name, whereby He shall be called," that is, under the Gospel, "The Lord our

[1] Deut. xii. 5. 8. 9.

Righteousness[1];" and next applies this special title to the Church, thus,—in his thirty-third chapter, "This is the Name whereby *she* shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." His Name is upon her; His Name is her Name. And hence the prophet Malachi, speaking of the Church Catholic, and its perpetual feast of bread and wine in Holy Communion, says, "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, *My Name* shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto *My Name*, and a pure offering, for *My Name* shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts[2]." His Name is there, where is the predicted "pure offering."

On the whole, then, it would appear that the stranger in the text might use the Name of Jesus without following the Apostles, because they, though Christ's Apostles, had not yet had the Name of Christ named upon them, in order to their forming together His Church; but that ever since His resurrection that Church has existed, and has borne His Name; and to use His Name except in and under the Church, is to treat His sacred Name irreverently, which whoso does, God will not hold him guiltless, unless he does it in ignorance; and then, though his work will perish, he will be saved, yet so as by fire.

And hence such earnest exhortations are given us by St. Paul against division and disobedience; for instance, "Mark them who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid

[1] Jer. xxiii. 6; xxxiii. 16.

[2] Mal. i. 11.

them [1];" "Whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions; are ye not carnal [2]?" "We command you that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us;" "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves [3]."

I have but one point more to dwell upon before I conclude. I have been showing what the text must *not* be taken to mean at this day. I have shown that it must not and cannot rightly be applied to countenance those who now set up against the Church; but the question arises, to what *does* it now apply? Every word of Christ has a meaning for all times; it is not enough to expose the wrong meaning, unless we expound the right also. This is just the reason why so much of Scripture is taken in a wrong sense, because orthodox men have been satisfied merely with refuting the wrong, instead of giving the right sense. The way to refute error is to preach truth: till we apply this text rightly, it will continue, in spite of all our refutations, to be applied wrongly. I proceed, then, to say a few words by way of showing the right explanation; and, in doing so, you will see, I shall be enforcing from the text this very principle.

Let it be observed, then, *who* it was who was not to be forbidden to use the Name of Jesus, though he did not follow the Apostles. Not one who preached *false* doctrine, not one who opposed the Apostles, or interfered with them, or had separated from them. Nothing then

[1] Rom. xvi. 17. [2] 1 Cor. iii. 3.
[3] 2 Thess. iii. 6. Heb. xiii. 17.

can be inferred from the text,—though we take it ever so literally, or apply it ever so exactly to the present times,—nothing, I repeat it, can be inferred in favour of those who *separate* from the Church, who *set up against* the Church, or who *interfere* with it, and *trouble* it. But there are a number of persons to whom the text does more or less apply, and whom we ought to treat according to its spirit. There are a number of persons not members of the Church, who neither have themselves separated from it, nor oppose it, nor usurp its place, but who are more or less in the condition of the man in the text, "not following us," yet using the Name of Jesus. Many sects and parties in this country are of long standing; many men are born in them; many men have had no opportunities of knowing the truth. Again, it may so happen they are exerting themselves for the cause of Christ in places where the Church is unknown, or where it does not extend itself. And, moreover, it may so be that they have upon them many consolatory proofs of seriousness and earnestness, of a true love for Christ, and desire to obey Him and not to magnify themselves. Here, then, our Lord seems to say, "Forbid them not in their preaching."

The greater part of the world is in heathen darkness; sectaries of various descriptions will be found sending out missions for the conversion of souls to Christ, into places whither the Church has not sent missionaries. Now we are not bound to support them, for this reason, because they do not hold the *whole* truth of the Gospel. But we are not to behave towards them in a hostile way; rather we ought to bless God for whatever they

mean well in doing, and pray Him that they may mean and act still better.

Or, again, even in a country into which the Church *is* sending missions, it seems the duty of those whom she sends thither to be kind and tolerant towards all Christian bodies who are labouring there in the same cause, *as far* as these latter do not actively interfere with her, or oppose her doctrine, which, alas! will too often be the case. We are not bound to join them, were their doctrine ever so like ours, any more than the Apostles were bound to follow the stranger who did not follow *them*, which no one will say; but we are to suffer them to go their way, while we go ours.

And again; even at home there are many parts of the country into which the Church has not duly come, and which perhaps owe what they have of the Gospel to the labours of sectaries. *Here*, too, as is evident, we are bound to act very differently from what would be our duty in places where they had established themselves in the face of the Church, and against the Church; and, without going into details, it is evident that there is a sense in which our Lord's words in the text apply to *them*.

On the whole, then, I would say this; when strangers to the Church preach great Christian truths, and do not oppose the Church, then, though we may not *follow* them, though we may not join them, yet we are not allowed to *forbid* them; but in proportion as they preach what is in itself untrue, and do actively oppose God's great Ordinance, so far they are not like the man whom our Lord told His Apostles not to forbid.

But in all cases, whether they preach true doctrine or not, or whether they oppose us or not, so much we may learn, viz. that we must overcome them, not so much by refuting them, as by preaching *the truth*. As we are told to overcome evil with good, so must we overcome falsehood with truth; and as in baptism the curse of Adam is removed by the in-coming of Divine grace, so in like manner the reign of heresy is put to flight, not by merely attacking *it*, but by the manifestation of the pure Gospel instead. Let us be far more bent on preaching our own doctrine than on refuting another's. Let us be far more set upon alluring souls into the right way than on forbidding them the wrong. Let us be like racers in a course, who do not impede, but try to outstrip each other. Let us outstrip others in our lives and conversation, "by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report." Let us conquer by meekness, gentleness, forbearance, and perseverance. When the voice of error and strife is loud, let us keep silence; let us not be unwilling to be triumphed over as blind and prejudiced persons, as bigots, or as fanatics, or as zealots, or to be called any other hard names by the world. Let us forbid them not. God will avenge us in His own way and at His own time. The weak shall be strong, and the despised shall become honourable. "He shall make our righteousness as clear as the light, and our just dealing as the noon-day. Leave off wrath and let go displeasure;

fret not thyself, else shalt thou be moved to do evil. Hope thou in the Lord and keep His way, and He shall promote thee, that thou shalt possess the land. Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last[1]."

[1] Ps. xxxvii. 6. 8. 35. 38.

# SERMON XV.

## RISING WITH CHRIST.

### (ASCENSION.)

COL. iii. 1—3.

*"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."*

IN the Communion Service we are exhorted to "lift up our hearts;" we answer, "We lift them up unto the Lord,"—unto the Lord, that is, who is ascended on high; to Him who is not here, but has risen, appeared to His Apostles, and retired out of sight. To that ascended and unseen Saviour, who has overcome death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, this day and all days, but especially at this season, when we commemorate His Resurrection and Ascension, are we bound to rise in spirit after His pattern. Far otherwise, alas! is it with the many; they are hindered, nay, possessed and absorbed by this world, and they cannot rise because they have no wings. Prayer and fasting have been called the wings of the soul, and they who neither fast nor pray, cannot follow Christ. They cannot lift up their hearts to Him. They have no treasure above,

but their treasure, and their heart, and their faculties are all upon the earth; the earth is their portion, and not heaven.

Great, then, is the contrast between the many, and those holy and blessed souls (and may we be in their company!) who rise with Christ, and set their affection on things above, not on things on the earth. The one are in light and peace, the others form the crowd who are thronging and hurrying along the broad way "which leadeth to destruction;" who are in tumult, warfare, anxiety, and bitterness, or, at least, in coldness and barrenness of mind; or, at best, in but a short-lived merriment, hollow and restless; or altogether blind to the future. This is the case of the many; they walk without aim or object, they live irreligiously, or in lukewarmness, yet have nothing to say in their defence. They follow whatever strikes them and pleases them; they indulge their natural tastes. They do not think of forming their tastes and principles, and of rising higher than they are, but they sink and debase themselves to their most earthly feelings and most sensual inclinations, because these happen to be the most powerful. On the contrary, holy souls take a separate course; they have risen with Christ, and they are like persons who have climbed a mountain and are reposing at the top. All is noise and tumult, mist and darkness at its foot; but on the mountain's top it is so very still, so very calm and serene, so pure, so clear, so bright, so heavenly, that to their sensations it is as if the din of earth did not sound below, and shadows and gloom were no where to be found.

And, indeed, the mountain's top is a frequent image in Scripture, under which the Almighty Spirit speaks to us of our calling in Christ. Thus, for instance, it was prophesied of the Christian Church, "that the mountain of the Lord's House should be established in the top of the mountains . . . and many people should go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord." And, in like manner, the Temple built by Solomon was upon a high place; doubtless, among other reasons, which at first sight seem of an opposite nature, by way of showing us that religion consists in retiring from the world, and rising towards heaven. "He chose the tribe of Judah," says the Psalmist, "even the hill of Sion which He loved. And there He built His Temple on high[1]." I do not mean, of course, that a man can be religious who neglects his duties of this world; but that there is an inner and truer life in religious men, beyond the life and conversation which others see, or, in the words of the text, their "life is hid with Christ in God." Christ, indeed, Himself worketh hitherto, as His Father worketh, and He bids us also "work while it is day;" yet, for all this, it is true that the Father and the Son are invisible, that They have an ineffable union with each other, and are not in any dependence upon the mortal concerns of this world; and so we, in our finite measure, must live after Their Divine pattern, holding communion with Them, as if we were at the top of the Mount, while we perform our duties towards

[1] Isa. ii. 2, 3. Ps. lxxviii. 69, 70.

that sinful and irreligious world which lies at the foot of it.

The history of Moses affords us another instance of this lifting up of the heart to God, and that, too, represented to us under the same image. He went up to the Mount for forty days, and there he saw visions. And observe, he remained all this time without eating bread or drinking water. That miraculous fast was a lesson to us, how it is that we Christians are to draw near to God. But observe, again, while he was on the Mount, what was going on in the plain. *There* was the turbulence, the ungodliness, the sin of the world. His servant Joshua said, as they heard the noise of the shouting, "There is a noise of war in the camp:" but Moses said, "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear[1]."

Our Saviour's own history gives us another striking instance of this Divine communion, and the troublesome world in contrast. When He ascended the Mount of Transfiguration with His three Apostles, on the summit all was still and calm as heaven. He appeared in glory; Moses and Elias with Him; the Father's voice was heard: St. Peter said, "Master, it is good for us to be here." Then he and his brother Apostles felt that their life was hid with Christ in God. But when they came down the mountain, how the scene was changed! It was descending from heaven to the world. "When

[1] Exod. xxxii. 17, 18.

He came to His disciples," says the Evangelist, "He saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld Him, were greatly amazed, and running to Him, saluted Him." And He found that the Apostles were trying to cast out a devil, and could not. And then He spoke the word, conformable with Moses' deed, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting[1]."

And again; we may even say that, when our Lord was lifted up on the Cross, then, too, He presented to us the same example of a soul raised heavenwards and hid in God, with the tumultuous world at its feet. The unbelieving multitude swarmed about the Cross, they that passed by reviled Him, and the scribes mocked Him. Meanwhile, He Himself was, amid His agony, in Divine contemplations. He said. "Father, forgive them;" "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" "It is finished;" "Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." And as He was hid in God, so too, even at that awful moment, one was at His side gazing on Him, and hid in God with Him. The penitent thief said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom; and Jesus said unto Him, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise[2]."

And much more on His resurrection was He withdrawn from this troublesome world, and at peace, as the Psalmist foretold it. "I have set My King upon

[1] Mark ix. 5. 14, 15. 29.

[2] Luke xxiii. 42, 43.

My holy *hill* of Sion." "Ever since the world began hath Thy seat been prepared; Thou art from everlasting. The floods are risen, O Lord, the floods have lift up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The waves of the sea are mighty and rage horribly; but yet the Lord, who dwelleth on high, is mightier[1]."

These passages may be taken as types, if not as instances, of the doctrine and precept which the text contains. Christ is risen on high, we must rise with Him. He is gone away out of sight, and we must follow Him. He is gone to the Father, we, too, must take care that our new life is hid with Christ in God. This was the gracious promise, which is signified in the prayer He offered before His passion for all His disciples, even to the end of the world. "Holy Father," He said, "keep through Thine own Name, those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are. . . . I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they may be one in Us. . . . I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one . . . that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them[2]." Agreeably to this sacred and awful announcement, St. Paul speaks in

[1] Ps. ii. 6; xciii. 3–5. [2] John xvii. 11. 15, 16. 20, 21. 23. 26.

the text and following verses; "If ye, then, be risen with Christ," he says, "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth."

It is then the duty and the privilege of all disciples of our glorified Saviour, to be exalted and transfigured with Him; to live in heaven in their thoughts, motives, aims, desires, likings, prayers, praises, intercessions, even while they are in the flesh; to look like other men, to be busy like other men, to be passed over in the crowd of men, or even to be scorned or oppressed, as other men may be, but the while to have a secret channel of communication with the Most High, a gift the world knows not of; to have their life *hid* with Christ in God. Men of this world live in this world, and depend upon it; they place their happiness in this world; they look out for its honours or comforts. *Their* life is not hid. And every one they meet they suppose to be like-minded. They think they can be *as* sure that every other man looks out for the things which they covet, as they can be sure he has the same outward appearance, the same make, a soul and body, eyes and tongue, hands and feet. They look up and down the world, and, as far as they see, one man is just like another. They know that a great many, nay, far the greater part, are like themselves, lovers of this world, and they infer, in consequence, that all are such. They discredit the possibility of any other motives and

views being paramount in a man but those of this world. They admit, indeed, that a man may be *influenced* by religious motives, but to be *governed* by them, to *live* by them, to own them as turning points, and primary and ultimate laws of his conduct, this is what they do not credit. They have devised proverbs and sayings to the effect that every man has his price; that all of us have our weak side; that religion is a beautiful theory; and that the most religious man is only he who hides most skilfully from himself, as well as from others, his own love of the world; and that men would not be men if they did not love and desire wealth and honour. And, in accordance with these views, they imputed all base and evil things to our Lord Himself, rather than believe Him to be what He said He was. They said He was a deceiver; that He wished to make Himself a king; that His miracles were wrought through Beelzebub. But He all the while, the Son of Man, was but in outward act sojourning here, and was in spirit in heaven. Follow Him into the wilderness during His forty days' fast, when He did neither eat nor drink; or after the devil's temptation, when Angels came and ministered unto Him; or go with Him up that mountain to pray, where, as I have already said, He was transfigured, and talked with Moses and Elias; and you will see where He really was, and with whom, while He sojourned upon earth,—with Saints and Angels, with His Father, who announced Him as His beloved Son, and with the Holy Ghost, who descended upon Him. He was "the Son of Man which is in heaven," and "had meat to eat" which others "knew not of."

And such in our measure shall we be, both in the appearance and in the reality, if we be His. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ;" but, as far as this world goes, we shall be of little account. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not[1]." Or, more than this, we may be perhaps ridiculed for our religion, despised, or punished; "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household[2]?" Such is the condition of those who rise with Christ. He rose in the night, when no one saw Him; and we, too, rise we know not when nor how. Nor does any one know any thing of our religious history, of our turnings to God, of our growings in grace, of our successes, but God Himself, who secretly is the cause of them.

In this way let us enjoy and profit by this holy season; Christ hath "died, yea, rather hath risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Wonderful things had taken place, while the world seemed to go on as usual. Pontius Pilate thought himself like other governors. The Jewish rulers went on with the aims and the prejudices which had heretofore governed them. Herod went on in his career of sin, and having seen and put to death one prophet, hoped to see miracles from a second. They all viewed all things as of this world; they said, "to-morrow shall be as to-day, and much more abundant." They heard the news and saw the sights and provided

[1] 1 John i. 3; iii. 1. [2] Matt. x. 25.

for the needs of the moment, and forgot the thought of God. Thus men went on at the foot of the mount, and they cared not for what was on the summit. They did not understand that another and marvellous system, contrary to this world, was proceeding forward under the veil of this world. So it was then: so it is now. The world witnesses not the secret communion of the Saints of God, their prayers, praises, and intercessions. But *they* have the present privileges of saints, notwithstanding,—a knowledge, and a joy, and a strength, which they cannot compass or describe, and would not if they could. "O how plentiful is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; and that Thou hast prepared for them that put their trust in Thee, even before the sons of men." Are they in anxiety? "Thou shalt hide them privily by Thine own presence from the provoking of all men; Thou shalt keep them secretly in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues." Are they in disappointment? "Thou hast put gladness in their heart, since the time that their enemies' corn, and wine, and oil increased." Are they despised by the prosperous? "*They* have children at their desire," says another Psalm, "and leave the rest of their substance for their babes; but as for me, I will behold Thy presence in righteousness, and when I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it." Are they in despondency? The Psalmist has provided them with a consolation: "Nevertheless, I am alway by Thee, for Thou hast holden me by my right hand; Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and after that receive me with glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and

there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for 'ever." Are they in peril? "Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty . . . a thousand shall fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." Thus there is fulness without measure for every need, to be found in Him with whom our life is lodged; there is what will "satisfy us with the plenteousness of His house, who gives us to drink of His pleasures, as out of the river. For with Him is the well of life, and in His light shall we see light." So that they may fittingly cry out, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise His holy name . . . who forgiveth all thy sin, and healeth all thine infirmities; who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and lovingkindness; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, making thee young and lusty as an eagle[1]."

All this, my brethren, I say is our portion, if we choose but to accept it. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall rise up in His holy place? Who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon Thy holy hill? Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life, and doeth the thing that is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them

[1] Ps. xxxi. 21, 22; iv. 8; xvii. 15, 16; lxxiii. 22—25; xci. 1—7; xxxvi. 8, 9; ciii. 1, 3—5.

that seek Him, even of them that seek thy face, O Jacob." Aspire, then, to be "fellow-citizens of the Saints and of the household of God." Follow their steps as they have followed Christ. Though the hill be steep, yet faint not, for the reward is great; and till you have made the trial, you can form no idea how great that reward is, or how high its nature. The invitation runs, "O taste, and see how gracious the Lord is." If you have hitherto thought too little of these things, if you have thought religion lies *merely* in what it certainly does consist in also, in filling your worldly station well, in being amiable, and well-behaved, and considerate, and orderly,—but if you have thought it was nothing more than this, if you have neglected to stir up the great gift of God which is lodged deep within you, the gift of election and regeneration, if you have been scanty in your devotions, in intercession, prayer, and praise; and if, in consequence, you have little or nothing of the sweetness, the winning grace, the innocence, the freshness, the tenderness, the cheerfulness, the composure of the elect of God, if you are at present really deficient in praying, and other divine exercises, make a new beginning henceforth. Start, now, with this holy season, and rise with Christ. See, He offers you His hand; He is rising; rise with Him. Mount up from the grave of the old Adam; from grovelling cares, and jealousies, and fretfulness, and worldly aims; from the thraldom of habit, from the tumult of passion, from the fascinations of the flesh, from a cold, worldly, calculating spirit, from frivolity, from selfishness, from effeminacy,

from self-conceit and highmindedness. Henceforth set about doing what it is so difficult to do, but what should not, must not be left undone; watch, and pray, and meditate, that is, according to the leisure which God has given you. Give freely of your time to your Lord and Saviour, if you have it. If you have little, show your sense of the privilege by giving that little. But any how, show that your heart and your desires, show that your life is with your God. Set aside every day times for seeking Him. Humble yourself that you have been hitherto so languid and uncertain. Live more strictly to Him; take His yoke upon your shoulder; live by rule. I am not calling on you to go out of the world, or to abandon your duties in the world, but to redeem the time; not to give hours to mere amusement or society, while you give minutes to Christ; not to pray to Him only when you are tired, and fit for nothing but sleep; not altogether to omit to praise Him, or to intercede for the world and the Church; but in good measure to realize honestly the words of the text, to "set your affection on things above;" and to prove that you are His, in that your heart is risen with Him, and your life hid in Him.

# SERMON XVI.

## WARFARE THE CONDITION OF VICTORY.

(ASCENSION.)

LUKE xxiv. 52, 53.

*"And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God. Amen."*

FOR forty days after His resurrection did our Saviour Christ endure to remain below, at a distance from the glory which He had purchased. The glory was now His, He might have entered into it. Had He not had enough of earth? what should detain Him here, instead of returning to the Father, and taking possession of His throne? He delayed in order to comfort and instruct those who had forsaken Him in the hour of trial. A time had just passed when their faith had all but failed, even while they had His pattern before their eyes; and a time, or rather a long period was in prospect, when heavier trials far were to come upon them, yet He was to be withdrawn. They hitherto understood not that suffering is the path to glory, and that none sit down upon Christ's throne, who do not first overcome, as He overcame. He stayed to impress upon them this lesson,

lest they should still misunderstand the Gospel, and fail a second time. "Ought not Christ," He said, "to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?" And having taught them fully, after forty days, at length He rose above the troubles of this world. He rose above the atmosphere of sin, sorrow, and remorse, which broods over it. He entered into the region of peace and joy, into the pure light, the dwelling-place of Angels, the courts of the Most High, through which resound continually the chants of blessed spirits and the praises of the Seraphim. There He entered, leaving His brethren in due season to come after Him, by the light of His example, and the grace of His Spirit.

Yet, though forty days was a long season for Him to stay, it was but a short while for the Apostles to have Him among them. What feeling must have been theirs, when He parted from them? So late found, so early lost again. Hardly recognized, and then snatched away. The history of the two disciples at Emmaus was a figure or picture of the condition of the eleven. Their eyes were holden that they should not know Him, while He talked with them for three years; then suddenly they were opened, and He forthwith vanished away. So had it been, I say, with all of them. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip[1]?" had already been His expostulation with one of them. They had not known Him all through His ministry. Peter, indeed, had confessed Him to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God; but even he showed

[1] John xiv. 9.

inconsistency and change of mind in his comprehension of this great truth. They did not understand at that time who and what He was. But after His resurrection it was otherwise: Thomas touched His hands and His side, and said, "My Lord and my God;" in like manner, they all began to know Him; at length they recognized Him as the Living Bread which came down from heaven, and was the Life of the world. But hardly had they recognized Him, when He withdrew Himself once for all from their sight, never to see them again, or to be seen by them on earth; never to visit earth again, till He comes at the last day to receive all Saints unto Himself, and to take them to their rest. "So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God[1]." Late found, early lost. This, perhaps, was the Apostles' first feeling on His parting from them. And the like often happens here below. We understand our blessings just when about to forfeit them; prospects are most hopeful, just when they are to be hopelessly clouded. Years upon years we have had great privileges, the light of truth, the presence of holy men, opportunities of religious improvement, kind and tender parents. Yet we knew not, or thought not of our happiness; we valued not our gift; and then it is taken away, just when we have begun to value it.

What a time must that forty days have been, during which, while He taught them, all His past teaching must have risen in their minds, and their thoughts then must have recurred in overpowering contrast to their

[1] Mark xvi. 19.

thoughts now. His manner of life, His ministry, His discourses, His parables, His miracles, His meekness, gravity, incomprehensible majesty, the mystery of His grief and joy; the agony, the scourge, the cross, the crown of thorns, the spear, the tomb; their despair, their unbelief, their perplexity, their amazement, their sudden transport, their triumph,—all this was in their minds; and surely not the least at that awful hour, when He led His breathless followers out to Bethany, on the fortieth day. "He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven[1]." Surely all His history, all His dealings with them, came before them, gathered up in that moment. Then, as they gazed upon that dread Divine countenance and that heavenly form, every thought and feeling which they ever had had about Him came upon them at once. He had gone through His work; theirs was to come, their work and their sufferings. He was leaving them just at the most critical time. When Elijah went up, Elisha said: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." With a like feeling, might the Apostles now gaze up into heaven, as if with the hope of arresting His ascent. Their Lord and their God, the light of their eyes, the stay of their hearts, the guide of their feet, was taken away. "My beloved had withdrawn Himself and was gone. My soul failed when He spake; I sought Him, but I could not find Him; I

[1] Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

called Him, but He gave me no answer[1]." Well might they use the Church's words as now; "We beseech Thee, leave us not comfortless." O Thou who wast so gentle and familiar with us, who didst converse with us by the way, and sit at meat with us, and didst enter the vessel with us, and teach us on the Mount, and bear the malice of the Pharisees, and feast with Martha, and raise Lazarus, art Thou gone, and shall we see Thee no more? Yet so it was determined: privileges they were to have, but not the same; and their thoughts henceforth were to be of another kind than heretofore. It was in vain wishing back what was past and over. They were but told, as they gazed, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

Such are some of the feelings which the Apostles may have experienced on our Lord's ascension; but these are after all but human and ordinary, and of a kind which all of us can enter into; but other than these were sovereign with them at that solemn time, for upon the glorious Ascension of their Lord, "they worshipped Him," says the text, "and returned to Jerusalem with *great joy*, and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God." Now how was it, that when nature would have wept, the Apostles rejoiced? When Mary came to the sepulchre and found not our Lord's body, she stood without at the sepulchre weeping, and the Angels said unto her, as Christ said after them, "Woman, why weepest thou[2]?" Yet, on our Saviour's departure

[1] Cant. v. 6.

[2] John xx. 15.

forty days afterwards, when the Angels would reprove the Apostles, they did but say, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" There was no sorrow in the Apostles, in spite of their loss, in spite of the prospect before them, but "great joy," and "continual praise and blessing." May we venture to surmise that this rejoicing was the high temper of the brave and noble-minded, who have faced danger in idea and are prepared for it? Moses brought out of Egypt a timid nation, and in the space of forty years trained it to be full of valour for the task of conquering the promised land; Christ in forty days trains His Apostles to be bold and patient instead of cowards. "They mourned and wept" at the beginning of the season, but at the end they are full of courage for the good fight; their spirits mount high with their Lord, and when He is received out of their sight, and their own trial begins, "they return to Jerusalem with great joy, and are continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God."

For Christ surely had taught them what it was to have their treasure in heaven; and they rejoiced, not that their Lord was gone, but that their hearts had gone with Him. Their hearts were no longer on earth, they were risen aloft. When He died on the Cross, they knew not whither He was gone. Before He was seized, they had said to Him, "Lord, whither goest Thou? Lord, we know not whither Thou goest?" They could but follow Him to the grave and there mourn, for they knew no better; but now they saw Him ascend on high, and in spirit they ascended with Him. Mary wept at the grave because she thought

enemies had taken Him away, and she knew not where they had laid Him. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also [1]." Mary had no heart left to her, for her treasure was lost; but the Apostles were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God, for their hearts were in heaven, or, in St. Paul's words, they "were dead, and their life was hid with Christ in God."

Strengthened, then, with this knowledge, they were able to face those trials which Christ had first undergone Himself, and had foretold as their portion. "Whither I go," He had said to St. Peter, "thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." And He told them, "They shall put you out of the synagogues, yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service [2]." That time was now coming, and they were able to rejoice in what so troubled them forty days before. For they understood the promise, "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne [3]."

It will be well if we take this lesson to ourselves, and learn that great truth which the Apostles shrank from at first, but at length rejoiced in. Christ suffered, and entered into joy; so did they, in their measure, after Him. And in our measure, so do we. It is written, that "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God." God has all things in His own hands. He can spare, He can inflict: He often spares (may He

[1] Matt. vi. 21. [2] John xvi. 2. [3] Rev. iii. 21.

spare us still!) but He often tries us,—in one way or another He tries every one. At some time or other of the life of every one there is pain, and sorrow, and trouble. So it is; and the sooner perhaps we can look upon it as a law of our Christian condition, the better. One generation comes, and then another. They issue forth and succeed like leaves in spring; and in all, this law is observable. They are tried, and then they triumph; they are humbled, and then are exalted; they overcome the world, and then they sit down on Christ's throne.

Hence St. Peter, who at first was in such amazement and trouble at his Lord's afflictions, bids us not look on suffering as a strange thing, "as though some strange thing happened to us, but *rejoice*, inasmuch as we are *partakers* of Christ's sufferings; that when His glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy." Again, St. Paul says, "We glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience." And again, "If so be we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." And again, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." And St. John, "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is[1]." What is here said of persecution will apply of course to all trials, and much more to those lesser trials which are the utmost which Christians have commonly to endure now. Yet I suppose it is a long time before any one of us recognizes and un-

[1] 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13. Rom. v. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 12. 1 John iii. 1, 2.

derstands that his own state on earth is in one shape or other a state of trial and sorrow; and that if he has intervals of external peace, this is all gain, and more than he has a right to expect. Yet how different must the state of the Church appear to beings who can contemplate it as a whole, who have contemplated it for ages,—as the Angels! We know what experience does for us in this world. Men get to see and understand the course of things, and by what rules it proceeds; and they can foretell what will happen, and they are not surprised at what does happen. They take the history of things as a matter of course. They are not startled that things happen in one way, not in another; it is the rule. Night comes after day; winter after summer; cold, frost, and snow, in their season. Certain illnesses have their times of recurrence, or visit at certain ages. All things go through a process,—they have a beginning and an end. Grown men know this, but it is otherwise with children. To them every thing that they see is strange and surprising. They by turns feel wonder, admiration, or fear at every thing that happens; they do not know whether it will happen again or not; and they know nothing of the regular operation of causes, or the connexion of those effects which result from one and the same cause. And so too as regards the state of our souls under the Covenant of mercy; the heavenly hosts, who see what is going on upon earth, well understand, even from having seen it often, what is the course of a soul travelling from hell to heaven. They have seen, again and again, in numberless instances, that suffering is the path to peace; that they that sow in tears shall reap in

joy; and that what was true of Christ is fulfilled in a measure in His followers.

Let us try to accustom ourselves to this view of the subject. The whole Church, all elect souls, each in its turn, is called to this necessary work. Once it was the turn of others, and now it is our turn. Once it was the Apostles' turn. It was St. Paul's turn once. He had all cares on him all at once; covered from head to foot with cares, as Job with sores. And, as if all this were not enough, he had a thorn in the flesh added,—some personal discomfort ever with him. Yet he did his part well,—he was as a strong and bold wrestler in his day, and at the close of it was able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith[1]." And after him, the excellent of the earth, the white-robed army of Martyrs, and the cheerful company of Confessors, each in his turn, each in his day, have likewise played the man. And so down to this very time, when faith has well-nigh failed, first one and then another have been called out to exhibit before the Great King. It is as though all of us were allowed to stand around His Throne at once, and He called on first this man, and then that, to take up the chant by himself, each in his turn having to repeat the melody which his brethren have before gone through. Or as if we held a solemn dance to His honour in the courts of heaven, and each had by himself to perform some one and the same solemn and graceful movement at a signal given.

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 7.

Or as if it were some trial of strength, or of agility, and, while the ring of bystanders beheld and applauded, we in succession, one by one, were actors in the pageant. Such is our state;—Angels are looking on,—Christ has gone before,—Christ has given us an example, that we may follow His steps. He went through far more, infinitely more, than we can be called to suffer. Our brethren have gone through much more; and they seem to encourage us by their success, and to sympathize in our essay. Now it is our turn; and all ministering spirits keep silence and look on. O let not your foot slip, or your eye be false, or your ear dull, or your attention flagging! Be not dispirited; be not afraid; keep a good heart; be bold; draw not back;—you will be carried through. Whatever troubles come on you, of mind, body, or estate; from within or from without; from chance or from intent; from friends or foes;—whatever your trouble be, though you be lonely, O children of a heavenly Father, be not afraid! quit you like men in your day; and when it is over, Christ will receive you to Himself, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Christ is already in that place of peace, which is all in all. He is on the right hand of God. He is hidden in the brightness of the radiance which issues from the everlasting Throne. He is in the very abyss of peace, where there is no voice of tumult or distress, but a deep stillness,—stillness, that greatest and most awful of all goods which we can fancy,—that most perfect of joys, the utter, profound, ineffable tranquillity of the Divine Essence. He has entered into His rest.

O how great a good will it be, if, when this troublesome life is over, we in our turn also enter into that same rest,—if the time shall one day come, when we shall enter into His tabernacle above, and hide ourselves under the shadow of His wings; if we shall be in the number of those blessed dead who die in the Lord, and rest from their labour. Here we are tossing upon the sea, and the wind is contrary. All through the day we are tried and tempted in various ways. We cannot think, speak, or act, but infirmity and sin are at hand. But in the unseen world, where Christ has entered, all is peace. There is the eternal Throne, and a rainbow round about it, like unto an emerald; and in the midst of the throne the Lamb that has been slain, and has redeemed many people by His blood: and round about the throne four and twenty seats for as many elders, all clothed in white raiment, and crowns of gold upon their heads. And four living beings full of eyes before and behind. And seven Angels standing before God, and doing His pleasure unto the ends of the earth. And the Seraphim above. And withal, a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb[1]." "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." "There is no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither any more pain; for the former things are passed away[2]."

[1] Rev. vii. 14. [2] Rev. xxi. 4.

Nor any more sin; nor any more guilt; no more remorse; no more punishment; no more penitence; no more trial; no infirmity to depress us; no affection to mislead us; no passion to transport us; no prejudice to blind us; no sloth, no pride, no envy, no strife; but the light of God's countenance, and a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne. That is our *home;* here we are but on pilgrimage, and Christ is calling us home. He calls us to His many mansions, which He has prepared. And the Spirit and the Bride call us too, and all things will be ready for us by the time of our coming. "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession;" seeing we have "so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight;" "let us labour to enter into our rest;" "let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need [1]."

[1] Heb. iv. 11. 14. 16; xii. 1.

# SERMON XVII.

## WAITING FOR CHRIST.

(ASCENSION.)

REV. xxii. 20.

*"He who testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."*

WHEN our Lord was going away, He said He would quickly come again; yet knowing that by "quickly" He did not mean what would be at first sight understood by the word, He added, "suddenly," or "as a thief." "Behold I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments[1]." Had His coming been soon, in our sense of the word, it could not well have been sudden. Servants who are bid to wait for their master's return from an entertainment, could not, one should think, be overtaken by that return. It was because to us His coming would not *seem* soon, that it *was* sudden. What you expect to come, you wait for; what fails to come, you give up; while, then, Christ said that His coming would be soon, yet by saying it would be sudden, He said that to us it would seem long.

[1] Rev. xvi. 15.

Yet though to us He seems to delay, yet He has declared that His coming is speedy, He has bid us ever look out for His coming; and His first followers, as the Epistles show us, *were* ever looking out for it. Surely it is our duty to look out for it, as likely to come immediately, though hitherto for near two thousand years the Church has been looking out in vain.

Is it not something significant that, in the last book of Scripture, which more than any other implies a long continuance to the Christian Church,—that there we should have such express and repeated assurances that Christ's coming would be speedy? Even in the last chapter we are told it three times. "Behold I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." "Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me." And again, in the text, "He that testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly." Such is the announcement; and, in consequence, we are commanded to be ever looking out for the great Day, to "wait for His Son from heaven[1];" to "look and haste unto the coming of the day of God[2]."

It is true, indeed, that in one place St. Paul cautions his brethren against expecting the immediate coming of Christ; but he does not say more than that Christ will send a sign immediately before His coming,—a certain dreadful enemy of the truth,—which is to be followed by Himself at once, and therefore does not stand in our way, or prevent eager eyes from looking out for Him. And, in truth, St. Paul seems rather to be warning his brethren against being disappointed

[1] 1 Thess. i. 10. [2] 2 Pet. iii. 12.

if Christ did not come, than hindering them from expecting Him.

Now it may be objected that this is a kind of paradox; how is it possible, it may be asked, ever to be expecting what has so long been delayed? What has been so long coming, may be longer still. It was possible, indeed, for the early Christians, who had no experience of the long period which the Church was to remain on earth, to look out for Christ; but we cannot help using our reason: there are no more grounds to expect Christ now than at those many former times, when, as the event showed, He did not come. Christians have ever been expecting the last day, and ever meeting with disappointment. They have seen what they thought symptoms of His coming, and peculiarities in their own times, which a little more knowledge of the world, a more enlarged experience, would have shown them to be common to all times. They have ever been frightened without good reason, fretting in their narrow minds, and building on their superstitious fancies. What age of the world has there been in which people did not think the Day of Judgment coming? Such expectation has but evidenced and fostered indolence and superstition; it is to be considered as a mere weakness.

Now I shall attempt to say something in answer to this objection.

1. And first, considered as an objection to a habit of continual waiting (to use the common phrase), it proves too much. If it is consistently followed up, no age ought ever to expect the day of Christ; the age in which He

shall come (whenever it is) ought not to expect Him;—which is the very thing He has warned us against. He no where warns us against what is contemptuously called superstition; but He expressly warns us against high-minded security. If it be true that Christians have expected Him when He did not come, it is quite as true that when He does come, the world will not expect Him. If it be true that Christians have fancied signs of His coming, when there were none, it is equally true that the world will not see the signs of His coming when they are present. His signs are not so plain but you have to search for them; not so plain but you may be mistaken *in* your search; and your choice lies between the risk of thinking you see what is not, and of not seeing what is. True it is, that many times, many ages, have Christians been mistaken in thinking they discerned Christ's coming; but better a thousand times think Him coming when He is not, than once think Him not coming when He is. Such is the difference between Scripture and the world; judging by Scripture, you would ever be expecting Christ; judging by the world, you would never expect Him. Now He must come one day, sooner or later. Worldly men have their scoff at our failure of discernment now; but whose will be the want of discernment, whose the triumph then? And what does Christ think of their present scoff? He expressly warns us, by His Apostle, of scoffers, who shall say, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. . . . But, beloved (continues St.

Peter), be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day[1]."

It should be recollected, too, that the enemies of Christ have ever been expecting the downfall of His religion, age after age; and I do not see why the one expectation is more unreasonable than the other; indeed they illustrate each other. So it is, undeterred by the failure of former anticipations, unbelievers are ever expecting that the Church and the religion of the Church are coming to an end. They thought so in the last century. They think so now. They ever think the light of truth is going out, and that their hour of victory is come. Now, I repeat, I do not see why it is reasonable to expect the overthrow of religion still, after so many failures; and yet unreasonable, because of previous disappointments, to expect the coming of Christ. Nay, Christians at least, over and above the aspect of things, can point to an express promise of Christ, that He will one day come; whereas unbelievers, I suppose, do not profess any grounds at all for expecting their own triumph, except the signs of the times. They are sanguine, because they seem so strong, and the Church of God seems so weak; yet they have not enlarged their minds enough by the contemplation of past history to know that such apparent strength on the one side, and such apparent weakness on the other, has ever been the state of the world and the Church; and that this has ever been one chief or rather the main

[1] 2 Pet. iii. 4. 8.

reason, why Christians have expected the immediate end of all things, because the prospects of religion *were* so gloomy. So that, in fact, Christians and unbelievers have taken precisely the same view of the facts of the case; only they have drawn distinct conclusions from them, according to their creed. The Christian has said, "All looks so full of tumult, that the world is coming to an end;" and the unbeliever has said, "All is so full of tumult, that the Church is coming to an end;" and there is nothing, surely, more superstitious in the one opinion than in the other.

Now when Christians and unbelievers thus unite in expecting substantially the same thing, though they view it differently, according to their respective modes of thought, there cannot be any thing very extravagant in the expectation itself; there must be something ever present in the world which warrants it. And I hold this to be the case. Ever since Christianity came into the world, it has been, in one sense, going out of it. It is so uncongenial to the human mind, it is so spiritual, and man is so earthly, it is apparently so defenceless, and has so many strong enemies, so many false friends, that every age, as it comes, may be called "the last time." It has made great conquests, and done great works; but still it has done all, as the Apostle says of himself, "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling[1]." *How* it is that it is always failing, yet always continuing, God only knows who wills it,—but so it is; and it is no paradox to say, on the one hand, that it has

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 3.

lasted eighteen hundred years, that it may last many years more, and yet that it draws to an end, nay, is likely to end any day. And God would have us give our minds and hearts to the latter side of the alternative, to open them to impressions *from* this side, viz. that the end is coming;—it being a wholesome thing to live as if *that* will come in our day, which may come any day.

It was different during the ages before Christ came. The Saviour was to come. He was to bring perfection, and religion was to grow *towards* that perfection. There was a system of successive revelations going on, first one and then another; each prophet in his turn adding to the store of Divine truth, and gradually tending towards the full Gospel. Time was measured out for believing minds before Christ came, by the word of prophecy; so that He never could be expected in any age before the "fulness of time" in which He came. The chosen people were not bidden to expect Him at once; but after a sojourning in Canaan, and a captivity in Egypt, and a wandering in the wilderness, and judges, and kings, and prophets, at length seventy long weeks were determined to introduce Him into the world. Thus His delay was, as I may say, *recognized* then; and, *during* His delay, other doctrines, other rules, were given to fill the interval. But when once the Christ had come, as the Son over His own house, and with His perfect Gospel, nothing remained but to gather in His saints. No higher Priest could come,—no truer doctrine. The Light and Life of men had appeared, and had suffered, and had risen again; and nothing more was left to do. Earth had had its most solemn event, and seen its most

august sight; and therefore it was the last time. And hence, though time intervene between Christ's first and second coming, it is not *recognized* (as I may say) in the Gospel scheme, but is, as it were, an accident. For so it was, that up to Christ's coming in the flesh, the course of things ran straight towards that end, nearing it by every step; but now, under the Gospel, that course has (if I may so speak) altered its direction, as regards His second coming, and runs, not towards the end, but along it, and on the brink of it; and is at all times equally near that great event, which, did it run towards, it would at once run into. Christ, then, is ever at our doors; as near eighteen hundred years ago as now, and not nearer now than then; and not nearer when He comes than now. When He says that He will come soon, "soon" is not a word of time, but of natural order. This present state of things, "the present distress" as St. Paul calls it, is ever *close upon* the next world, and resolves itself into it. As when a man is given over, he may die any moment, yet lingers; as an implement of war may any moment explode, and must at some time; as we listen for a clock to strike, and at length it surprises us; as a crumbling arch hangs, we know not how, and is not safe to pass under; so creeps on this feeble weary world, and one day, before we know where we are, it will end.

And here I may observe in passing, on the light thus thrown upon the doctrine, that Christ is the sole Priest under the Gospel, or that the Apostles ever sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, or that Christ is with them always, even unto the end of the

world. Do you not see the force of these expressions? The Jewish Covenant, indeed, had "sundry times," which were ordered "in divers manners;" it had a long array of priests and a various history; one part of the series holier than another, and nearer heaven. But when Christ had come, suffered, and ascended, He was henceforth ever near us, ever at hand, even though He was not actually returned, ever scarcely gone, ever all but come back. He is the only Ruler and Priest in His Church, dispensing gifts, and has appointed none to supersede Him, because He is departed only for a brief season. Aaron took the place of Christ, and had a priesthood of His own; but Christ's priests have no priesthood but His. They are merely His shadows and organs, they are His outward signs; and what they do, He does; when they baptize, He is baptizing; when they bless, He is blessing. He is in all acts of His Church, and one of its acts is not more truly His act than another, for all are His. Thus we are, in all times of the Gospel, brought close to His Cross. We stand, as it were, under it, and receive its blessings fresh from it; only that since, historically speaking, time has gone on, and the Holy One is away, certain outward forms are necessary, by way of bringing us again under His shadow; and we enjoy those blessings through a mystery, or sacramentally, in order to enjoy them really. All this witnesses to the duty both of remembering and of looking out for Christ, teaching us to neglect the present, to rely on no plans, to form no expectations, for the future, but so to live in faith, as if He had not left us, so in hope, as if He had returned to us. We must

try to live as if the Apostles were living, and we must try to muse upon our Lord's life in the Gospels, not as a history, but as if a recollection.

2. This leads me to remark upon a second aspect under which the objection in question may be urged; viz. that this waiting for Christ is not only extravagant in its very idea, but becomes a superstition and weakness whenever carried into effect. The mind, intent upon the thought of an awful visitation close at hand, begins to fancy signs of it in the natural and moral world, and mistakes the ordinary events of God's providence for miracles. Thus Christians are brought into bondage, and substitute for the Gospel a fond religion, in which imagination takes the place of faith, and things visible and earthly take the place of Scripture. This is the objection; yet the text, on the other hand, while it sanctions the expectation, in the words "Surely I come quickly," surely sanctions the temper of waiting also, by adding, "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus."

I observe, then, that though Christians might be mistaken in what they took to be signs of Christ's coming, yet they were not wrong in their state of mind; they were not mistaken in looking out, and that for Christ. Whether credulous or not, they only acted as one acts towards some person beloved, or revered, or admired on earth. Consider the mode in which loyal persons look up to a good prince; you will find stories current, up and down the country, in his favour; people delight in believing that they have fallen in with tokens of his beneficence, nobleness, and paternal kind-

ness. Many of these reports are false, yet others are true, and, on the whole, we should not think highly of that man who, instead of being touched at this mutual sympathy between sovereign and people, occupied himself merely in carping at what he called their credulity, and sifting the accuracy of this or that particular story. A great thing, truly, after all, to be able to detect a few mis-statements, and to expose a few fictions, and to be without a heart! And forsooth, on the other hand, a sad deficiency in that people, I suppose, merely to be right on the whole, not in every particular, and to have the heart right! Who would envy such a man's knowledge? who would not rather have that people's ignorance? And, in like manner, I had rather be he, who, from love of Christ and want of science, thinks some strange sight in the sky, comet or meteor, to be the sign of His coming, than the man, who, from more knowledge and from lack of love, laughs at the mistake.

Before now, religious persons have taken appearances in the heaven for signs of Christ's coming, which do not now frighten us at all. Granted, but what then? let us consider the state of the case. Of old time it was not *known* generally that certain heavenly bodies moved and appeared at *fixed* times and by a rule; now it is known; that is, now men are *accustomed* to see them, then they were not accustomed. We know as little now as then *how* they come, or why; but then men were startled when they saw them, because they were strange, and now they are not strange, and therefore men are not startled. But how was it therefore absurd and ridiculous (for so it is that

persons now-a-days talk), why was it a foolish fond thing in a man to be impressed by what was rare and strange? Take a parallel case: travelling is common now, it was not common formerly. In consequence, we now travel without any serious emotion at parting from our friends; but then, because it was uncommon, even when risks were the same and the absence as long, persons did not go from home without much preparation, many prayers, and much leave-taking. I do not see any thing very censurable in being more impressed at uncommon things than at common.

And you will observe, that in the case of which I am speaking, persons who are looking out for Christ are not only, *in that* they look out, acting in obedience to Him, but are looking out,—in their very *way* of looking out, through the very signs through which they look out,—in obedience to Him. Always since the first, Christians have been looking out for Christ *in* the signs of the natural and moral world. If they have been poor and uneducated, strange sights in the sky, or tremblings of the ground, storms, failure of harvest, or disease, or any thing monstrous and unnatural, has made them think that He was at hand. If they were in a way to take a view of the social and political world, then the troubles of states—wars, revolutions, and the like,—have been additional circumstances which served to impress them, and kept their hearts awake for Christ. Now all these are nothing else but those very things which He Himself has told us to dwell upon, and has given us as signs of His coming. "There shall be signs," He says, "in the sun, and in

the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. . . . And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh [1]." One day the lights of heaven *will* be signs; one day the affairs of nations also *will* be signs; why, then, is it superstitious to *look* towards them? It is not. We may be wrong in the particulars we rest upon, and may show our ignorance in doing so; but there is nothing ridiculous or contemptible in our ignorance, and there is much that is religious in our watching. It is better to be wrong in our watching, than not to watch at all.

Nor does it follow that Christians were wrong, even in their particular anticipations, though Christ did not come, whereas they said, they saw His signs. Perhaps they *were* His signs, and He withdrew them again. Is there no such thing as countermanding? Do not skilful men in matters of this world sometimes form anticipations which turn out wrong, and yet we say that they *ought* to have been right? The sky threatens and then clears again. Or some military leader orders his men forward, and then for some reason recalls them; shall we say that informants were wrong who brought the news that he was moving? Well, in one sense Christ is ever moving forward, ever checking, the armies of heaven. Signs of the white horses are ever appearing,

[1] Luke xxi. 25, 26, 28.

ever vanishing. "Clouds return after the rain;" and His servants are not wrong in pointing to them, and saying that the weather is breaking, though it does not break, for it is ever unsettled.

And another thing should be observed, that though Christians have ever been expecting Christ, ever pointing to His signs, they have never said that He was come. They have but said that He was just coming, *all but* come. And so He was and is. Enthusiasts, sectaries, wild presumptuous men, *they* have said that He was *actually* come, or they have pointed out the exact year and day in which He would come. Not so His humble followers. They have neither announced nor sought Him, either in the desert or in the secret chambers, nor have they attempted to determine "the times and seasons, which the Father has put in His own power." They have but waited; when He actually comes, they will not mistake Him; and before then, they pronounce nothing. They do but see His forerunners.

Surely there can be no great harm, and nothing very ridiculous, where men are religious, in thus thinking the events of their day more than ordinary, in fancying that the world's matters are winding up, and that events are thickening for a final visitation; for, let it be observed, Scripture sanctions us in interpreting *all* that we see in the world in a religious sense, and as if all things were tokens and revelations of Christ, His Providence, and will. I mean that if this lower world, which seems to go on in its own way, independently of Him, governed by fixed laws or swayed by

lawless hearts, will, nevertheless, one day in an awful way, herald His coming to judge it, surely it is not impossible that the same world, both in its physical order and its temporal course, speaks of Him also in other manners. At first, indeed, one might argue that this world did but speak a language contrary to Him; that in Scripture it is described as opposed to God, to truth, to faith, to heaven; that it is said to be a deceitful veil, misrepresenting things, and keeping the soul from God. How then, it may be asked, can this world have upon it tokens of His presence, or bring us near to Him? Yet certainly so it is, that in spite of the world's evil, after all, He is in it and speaks through it, though not loudly. When He came in the flesh "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Nor did He strive nor cry, nor lift up His voice in the streets. So it is now. He still is here; He still whispers to us, He still makes signs to us. But His voice is so low, and the world's din is so loud, and His signs are so covert, and the world is so restless, that it is difficult to determine when He addresses us, and what He says. Religious men cannot but feel, in various ways, that His providence is guiding them and blessing them personally, on the whole; yet when they attempt to put their finger upon the times and places, the traces of His presence disappear. Who is there, for instance, but has been favoured with answers to prayer, such that, at the time, he has felt he never could again be unbelieving? Who has not had strange coincidences in his course of life which brought before him, in an overpowering way, the hand of God? Who has not had

thoughts come upon him with a sort of mysterious force, for his warning or his direction? And some persons, perhaps, experience stranger things still. Wonderful providences have before now been brought about by means of dreams; or in other still more unusual ways Almighty God has at times interposed. And then, again, things which come before our eyes, in such wise take the form of types and omens of things moral or future, that the spirit within us cannot but reach forward and presage what it is not told from what it sees. And sometimes these presages are remarkably fulfilled in the event. And then, again, the fortunes of men are so singularly various, as if a law of success and prosperity embraced a certain number, and a contrary law others. All this being so, and the vastness and mystery of the world being borne in upon us, we may well begin to think that there is nothing here below, but, for what we know, has a connexion with every thing else; the most distant events may yet be united, the meanest and highest may be parts of one; and God may be teaching us and offering us knowledge of His ways, if we will but open our eyes, in all the ordinary matters of the day. This is what thoughtful persons come to believe, and they begin to have a sort of faith in the Divine meaning of the accidents (as they are called) of life, and a readiness to take impressions from them, which may easily become excessive, and which, whether excessive or not, is sure to be ridiculed by the world at large as superstition. Yet, considering Scripture tells us that the very hairs of our head are all numbered by God, that all things are ours, and that all things work together for

our good, it does certainly encourage us in thus looking out for His presence in every thing that happens, however trivial, and in holding that to religious ears even the bad world prophesies of Him.

Yet, I say, this religious waiting upon God through the day, which is so like that spirit of watching which is under consideration, is just as open to objection and scoffing from the world. God does not so speak to us through the occurrences of life, that you can persuade others that He speaks. He does not act upon such explicit laws, that you can speak of them with certainty. He gives us sufficient tokens of Himself to raise our minds in awe towards Him; but He seems so frequently to undo what He has done, and to suffer counterfeits of His tokens, that a conviction of His wonder-working presence can but exist in the individual himself. It is not a truth that can be taught and recognized in the face of men; it is not of a nature to be urged upon the world at large, nay, even on religious persons, as a principle. God gives us enough to make us inquire and hope; not enough to make us insist and argue.

I have all along been speaking of thoughtful and conscientious persons; those who do their duty, and who study Scripture. It is quite certain that this regard to outward occurrences does become superstition, when it is found in men of irreligious lives, or of slender knowledge of Scripture. The great and chief revelation which God has made us of His will is through Christ and His Apostles. They have given us a knowledge of the truth; they have sent forth heavenly principles and doctrines into the world; they have accompanied

that revealed truth by Divine sacraments, which convey to the heart what otherwise would be a mere outward and barren knowledge; and they have told us to practise what we know, and obey what we are taught, that the Word of Christ may be formed and dwell in us. They have been inspired, moreover, to write Holy Scriptures for our learning and comfort; and in those Scriptures we find the history of this world interpreted for us by a heavenly rule. When, then, a man, thus formed and fortified within, with these living principles in his heart, with this firm hold and sight of things invisible, with likings, opinions, views, aims, moulded upon God's revealed law, looks abroad into the world, he does not come to the world for a revelation,—he has one already. He does not take his religion from the world, nor does he set an over-value upon the tokens and presages which he sees there. But far different is the case when a man is not thus enlightened and informed by revealed truth. Then he is but a prey, he becomes the slave, of the occurrences and events, the sights and sounds, the omens and prodigies, which meet him in the world, natural and moral. His religion is a bondage to things perishable, an idolatry of the creature, and is, in the worst sense of the word, superstition. Hence it is a common remark, that irreligious men are most open to superstition. For they have a misgiving that there is something great and Divine somewhere: and since they have it not within them, they have no difficulty in believing that it is anywhere else, wherever men pretend to the possession of it. Thus you find in history men in high place practising unlawful arts, consulting professed

wizards, or giving heed to astrology. Others have had their lucky and unlucky days; others have been the sport of dreams, or of other idle fancies. And you have had others bowing themselves down to idols. For they have had no principle, no root in themselves. They have been ignorant, too, of Scripture, in which God has most mercifully removed the veil off a portion of this world's history, in order that we may see *how* He works. Scripture is the key by which we are given to interpret the world; but they who have it not, roam amid the shadows of the world, and interpret things at random.

The same want of inward religious principle is shown in the light, senseless way in which so many adopt wrong forms of religious profession. He who has the light of Christ within him, hears the voice of enthusiastic, mistaken, self-willed, or hypocritical men, calling him to follow them, without being moved. But when a man is conscious he is a wilful sinner, and not at peace with God, when his own heart is against him, and he has no principle, no stay within him, then he is the prey of the first person who comes to him with strong language, and bids him believe in him. Hence you find numbers running eagerly after men who profess to work miracles, or who denounce the Church as apostate, or who maintain that none are saved but those who agree with themselves, or any one who, without any warrant of his being right, speaks confidently. Hence the multitude is so open to sudden alarms. You hear of their rushing out of a city in numbers at some idle prediction that the Day of Judgment is coming. Hence so many,

in the private and lower ranks of life, are so full of small superstitions, which are too minute to mention; all because they have not the light of truth burning in their heart.

But the true Christian is not of these. To him apply St. Paul's words, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any[1]." He knows how to "use this world as not abusing it." He *depends* on nothing in this world. He trusts not *its* sights against the revealed Word. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." Such is the promise made to him. And if he looks out into the world to seek, it is not to seek what he does not know, but what he does. He does not seek a Lord and Saviour. He has "found the Messias" long since; and he is looking out for *Him*. His Lord Himself has *bid* him look for Him in the signs of the world, and therefore he looks out. His Lord Himself has shown him, in the Old Testament, how He, the Lord of Glory, condescends to humble Himself to the things of heaven and earth. He knows that God's Angels are about the earth. He knows that once they were even used to come in human shape. He knows that the Son of God, ere now, has come on earth. He knows that He promised to His Church the presence of a miraculous agency, and has never recalled His promise. Again, he reads, in the Book of the Revelation, quite enough, not to show him what is coming, but to show

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 12.

him that now, as heretofore, a secret supernatural system is going on *under* this visible scene. And therefore he looks out for Christ, for His present providences, and for His coming; and, though often deceived in his expectation, and fancying wonderful things are coming on the earth, when they still delay, he uses, and comforts him with the Prophet's words, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the Lord answered me. . . . The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul, which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith [1]."

[1] Hab. ii. 1—4.

# SERMON XVIII.

## SUBJECTION OF THE REASON AND FEELINGS TO THE REVEALED WORD.

(ASCENSION.)

2 COR. x. 5.

*"Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."*

THE question may be asked, How is it possible to live as if the coming of Christ were not far off, when our reason tells us that it probably is distant? It may be objected that there are no grounds for expecting it now, more than for the last eighteen hundred years; that if His long absence is a reason for expecting it now, yet His promise of a speedy return was a reason for expecting it in earlier times; and if the one reason has turned out insufficient, so may the other; that if, in spite of His promise to be speedy, He has tarried so long, He may tarry longer still; that no signs of His coming can be greater than were abroad soon after His departure; that, certainly, there are no such signs now; nay, that during the first seven hundred years, and again about the year 1000, and later, there were many more signs of Christ's coming than there are

now,—more trouble of nations, more distress, more sickness, more terror. It may be said, that we cannot hope, and fear, and expect, and wait, as we will,—but that we must have *reasons* for so doing; and that if we are persuaded, in our deliberate judgment, that Christ's coming is not probable, we cannot make ourselves feel as if it were probable.

Now in considering this objection, which I shall do, I may have an opportunity of stating a great principle which obtains in Christian duty, the subjection of the whole mind to the law of God.

1. I deny, then, that our feelings and likings are only moved according to the dictates of what we commonly mean by reason; so far from it, that nothing is more common, on the other hand, than to say, that reason goes one way, and our wishes go another. There is nothing impossible, then, in learning to look out for the day of Christ's coming more earnestly than according to its probability in the judgment of reason. As reason may be a right guide for our feelings and likings to go by up to a certain point, so there may be cases in which it is unable to guide us, from its weakness; and as it is not impossible for sinful and irreligious men to like what their reason tells them they should not like; therefore it is not impossible for religious men also to desire, expect, and hope, what their reason is unequal to approve and accept. What is more common than to hear it said, "I love a person more than I respect him"? or, "I admire him more than I love him"? Or, again, we know how easy it is to open the mind to the influence of some feeling or emotion, and how difficult it is to

avoid such influence; how difficult it is to get a thought out of the mind, which reason says ought to be kept out, and which will intrude itself again and again; how difficult to restrain anger, fear, or other passion, which yet reason tells us should be restrained. It is, then, quite possible to have feelings and thoughts present with us in a way which is disproportionate, according to the judgment of reason. Or, take another instance. We know how the mind sometimes dwells upon the chance of what is barely possible, quite unreasonably, and often wrongly and dangerously. A number of things may happen, one perhaps as likely as another; and yet, from weakness of health, or excitement, it often happens that we cannot help thinking overmuch of some one of these possible events, and getting unduly anxious lest it should happen. Thus, if some dreadful occurrence has taken place, a fire, or a murder, or some horrible accident, persons become frightened, lest the same should happen to them, in a measure far exceeding what a mere calculation of probabilities warrants. Their imagination magnifies the danger; they cannot persuade themselves to look at things calmly, and according to their general course. They fix their thoughts upon one particular chance, in a way quite contrary to what reason suggests. Thus, so far from our feelings being moved according to the strict probabilities of things, the contrary is rather the rule. What Almighty God then requires of us is, to do that in one instance for His sake, which we do so commonly in indulgence of our own waywardness and weakness; to hope, fear, expect our Lord's coming,

more than reason warrants, and in a way which His word alone warrants; that is, to trust Him above our reason. You say, that it is not probable Christ will come at this time, and therefore you cannot expect it. Now, I say, you can expect it. You must feel there is a chance that He will come. Well, then, dwell on that chance; open your mind to it; treat that chance just as you so often treat the chance of fire, or peril by sea, or peril by land, or thieves. Our Lord says, that He shall come as a thief in the night. Now you know that if there has been some remarkable robbery, people are frightened far more than according to the chance of their being themselves robbed. They are haunted by the idea; it may be that the probability of their own houses being attempted is but small, yet the thing itself is an object of great apprehension to them, and they think more of the grievousness of the event apprehended, should it happen, than of the small chance of its happening. They are moved by the risk. And in like manner, as regards the coming of Christ; I do not say we must be excited, or unsettled, or engrossed with the thought, but still we must not let the long delay persuade us not to watch for it. "Though it tarry, wait for it." If He bids us, as a matter of duty, impress the prospect of His coming upon our imagination, He asks no hard thing; no hard thing, that is, to the willing mind; and what we can do we are bound to do.

2. This is what first suggests itself, but it opens the way to further thoughts. For only reflect, what is faith itself but an acceptance of things unseen, from the love of them, *beyond* the determinations of calculation and

experience? Faith outstrips argument. If there is only a fair chance that the Bible is true, that heaven is the reward of obedience, and hell of wilful sin, it is worth while, it is safe, to sacrifice this world to the next. It were worth while, though Christ told us to sell all that we have and follow Him, and to pass our time here in poverty and contempt, it were worth while on that chance to do it. This, then, is what is meant by faith going against reason, that it cares not for the measure of probabilities; it does not ask whether a thing is more or less likely; but if there is a fair and clear likelihood what God's will is, it acts upon it. If Scripture were not true, we should in the next world be left where we were; we should, in the event, be no worse off than before; but if it be true, then we shall be infinitely worse off for not believing it than if we had believed it. We all know the retort which the aged saint made in the story, when a licentious youth reminded him, how he would have wasted life if there were *no* future state of recompense: "True, my son," he answered, "but how *much* worse a waste is yours if there *is*."

Faith, then, does not regard *degrees* of evidence. You might lay it down as a rule, speaking in the way of reason, that we ought to have faith according to the evidence; that the more evidence there is, the more firm it should be; and the less evidence, the weaker will it be required of us. But this is not the case as regards religious faith,—which accepts the Word of God as firmly on the evidence which it is vouchsafed, as if that evidence were doubled. This, indeed, we see to be the case as regards things of earth; and surely what we

do towards men, we may bear to do towards God. If any one whom we trust and revere told us any news, which he had perfect means of knowing, we should believe him; we should not believe it more thoroughly because presently another told it to us also. And in like manner, though it is quite certain that Almighty God might have given us greater evidence than we possess, that He speaks to us in the Bible; yet since He has given us enough, faith does not ask for more, but is satisfied, and acts upon what *is* enough; whereas unbelief is ever asking for signs, more and greater, before it will yield to the Divine Word.

Returning to my main subject, I observe, in like manner, what is true of faith is true of hope. We may be commanded, if so be, to hope against hope, or to expect Christ's coming, in a certain sense, against reason. It is not inconsistent with God's general dealings towards us, that He should bid us feel and act as if that were at hand, which yet, if we went by what experience tells us, we should say was not likely to be at hand. If He bids us to believe in Him with our whole heart, whether the evidence of His speaking to us be greater or less, why may He not bid us wait for Him perseveringly, though the signs of His coming disappoint us, and reason desponds? We cannot tell in such a matter what is more probable and what is not; we can but attempt what we are told to do. And *that* we can do: we can direct and fashion our feelings according to His word, and leave the rest to Him.

3. Here, then, I am led to make a further remark; that as it is our duty to bring some things before our

minds, and contemplate them much more vividly than reason by itself would bid us, so, again, there are other things which it is a duty to put away from us, not to dwell upon, and not to realize, though they be brought before us. And yet it is evident, too, that persons might here also object, and say that it is impossible to help being moved and influenced by what we know for certain, just as they say that it is impossible to believe and expect what we know to be not certain.

For instance; we know that it is a duty not to be vain and conceited about any personal advantage we may happen to possess. Yet a man might ask, How is it possible to help it? He might say, "If persons excel in any respect, they must know it; it is quite absurd to suppose, as a rule, that they should not; but if they know it, how is it possible they should not take pleasure in their own excellence, and admire themselves for it? Admiration is the natural consequence of the sight of excellence: if persons know they excel, they cannot help admiring themselves; and if they excel, generally speaking, they cannot but know it; and this, whatever it be they excel in, whether in personal appearance, or in power of speech, or in gifts of mind, or in character, or in any other way."

But now, on the other hand, I suppose that it is quite certain that Scripture tells us *not* to pride ourselves on any thing we are, any thing we do; that is, not to indulge those feelings which, it seems, are the natural and legitimate result of our knowing what we do know. Now what is to be said to this? how are these opposites to be reconciled?

One answer would of course be this; that religious men know how defective, after all, their best deeds are, or their best points of character; or they know how much more others do; or they know their own great deficiencies in other respects; or they know how trifling some of those points are on which they may happen to be superior to others. But this is not a sufficient answer; because the points in question *are* excellences, whether great excellences or not, or whether or not there be others greater, or however wanting the parties may be in other respects. And herein lies, I think, the temptation which all persons have to self-esteem, that in a certain sense their judgment about themselves is not wrong; not that they are not very deficient in many things, not as if they did not know this, but that they *have* certain excellences, which really *are* excellences, and they *feel* them; and the question is, how can they help feeling them?

It may be suggested, perhaps, to account for the humility of religious men, that, whatever personal gifts they may have, they are *used* to them; and this it is which keeps them from thinking much of them. There is truth in this remark, of course, but it does not explain why they *once* have not thought much of them, viz. when the sight of what they were, was not so familiar to them as it is; and if they did, we may be sure that the effects of their former self-conceit will remain upon them now, having become habitual.

Another and far better reason why religious persons are not self-conceited is, that they dislike to think of whatever is good in them, and turn away from the

thought of it, whether their superiority to others be in mind or body, in intellectual powers or in moral attainments. But there is, I think, another more direct reason, and more connected with my present subject.

It is this: though religious men have gifts, and though they know it, yet they do not *realize* them. It is not necessary here to explain exactly what is meant by the word "realizing;" we all understand the word enough for my present purpose, and shall all confess that, at least, there is an abundance of matters which men do *not* realize, though they ought to do so. For instance; how loudly men talk of the shortness of this life, of its vanity and unprofitableness, and of the claims which the world to come has upon us! This is what we hear said daily, yet few act upon the truths they utter; and why? because they do not *realize* what they are so ready to proclaim. They do not see Him who is invisible, and His eternal kingdom.

Well, then, what men omit to do when the doing is a duty, that they can surely also omit to do in cases when omission is a duty. Serious men may know indeed, if it so be, what their excellences are, whether religious, or moral, or any other, but they do not feel them in that vivid way which we call realizing. They do not open their hearts to the knowledge, so that it becomes fruitful. Barren knowledge is a wretched thing, when knowledge ought to bear fruit; but it is a good thing, when it would otherwise act merely as a temptation. When men realize a truth, it becomes an influential principle within them, and leads to a number of consequences both in opinion and in conduct. The case

is the same as regards realizing our own gifts. But men of superior minds know them without realizing. They may know that they have certain excellences, if they have them, they may know that they have good points of character, or abilities, or attainments; but it is in the way of an unproductive knowledge, which leaves the mind just as it found it. And this seems to be what gives such a remarkable simplicity to the character of holy men, and amazes others so much that they think it a paradox or inconsistency, or even a mark of insincerity, that the same persons should profess to know so much about themselves, and yet so little,—that they can hear so much said about themselves, that they can bear so much praise, so much popularity, so much deference, and yet without being puffed up, or arrogating aught, or despising others; that they can speak about themselves, yet in so unaffected a tone, with so much nature, with such childlike innocence, and such graceful frankness.

Another instance of this great gift of knowing without realizing, is afforded us in relation to subjects to which I will but allude. Men who indulge their passions have a knowledge, different in kind from those who have abstained from such indulgence; and when they speak on subjects connected with it, realize them in a way in which others cannot realize them. The very ideas which are full of temptation to the former, the words which are painful to them to utter, all that causes them shame and confusion of face, can be said and thought of by the innocent without any distress at all. Angels can look upon sin with simple abhorrence and wonder, without humiliation or secret emotion; and a

like simplicity is the reward of the chaste and holy; and that to the great amazement of the unclean, who cannot understand the state of mind of such a one, or how he can utter or endure thoughts which to themselves are full of misery and guilt. And hence sometimes you find men in these days, in which the will of the natural man is indulged to the full, taking up the writings of holy men who have lived in deserts or in cloisters, or with an Angel's heart have ruled Christ's flock, and broken with holy hands the bread of life, and viewing their words in their own murky atmosphere, and imputing to them their own grossness; nay, carping at the words of Holy Scripture, which are God's, and at the words of the Church, as if the sacred mystery of the Incarnation had not introduced a thousand new and heavenly associations into this world of sin.

And hence, again, you will find self-indulgent men unable to comprehend the real existence of sanctity and severity of mind in any one. They think that all persons must be full of the same wretched thoughts and feelings which torment themselves. They think that none can avoid it, from the nature of the case; only that certain persons contrive to hide what goes on in their hearts, and, in consequence, they call them pretenders and hypocrites.

This, too, is what they also say as regards the instance which I took first,—a man's knowledge of his gifts. They think that men who appear to think little of themselves are conceited within, and that what is called modesty is affectation.

I might make the same remark also as regards the

absence of resentment upon injury or insult, which characterizes a really religious man. Often, indeed, such a one feels keenly what is done against him, though he represses the feeling as a matter of duty; but the higher state of mind is when he does not feel, that is, when he does not realize, that any injustice has been done him; so that if he attempts to speak of it, it will be in the same sort of strange, unreal, and (as I may say) forced and unnatural way in which pretenders to religion speak of religious joy and spiritual comfort, for he is as little at home with anger and revenge as hypocrites are with thoughts of heaven.

Again; we may so unduly realize that a life of virtue is for our interest, as to act on prudential motives, not from a sense of duty. And again; though it be our duty to inquire and search out for ourselves the truth in religious matters, yet we may so vaunt in our private judgment, and make a merit of the exercise of it, that our search becomes almost a sin.

Here then are a number of cases, all in point, to illustrate one and the same truth, that the Christian's character is formed by a rule higher than that of calculation and reason, consisting in a Divine principle or life, which transcends the anticipations and criticisms of ordinary men. Judging by mere worldly reason, the Christian ought to be self-conceited, for he is gifted; he ought to understand evil, because he sees and speaks of it; he ought to feel resentment, because he is conscious of being injured; he ought to act from self-interest, because he knows that what is right is also expedient; he ought to be conscious and fond of the exercises of

private judgment, because he engages in them; he ought to be doubting and hesitating in his faith, because his evidence for it might be greater than it is; he ought to have no expectation of Christ's coming, because Christ has delayed so long; but not so: his mind and heart are formed on a different mould. In these, and ten thousand other ways, he is open to the misapprehensions of the world, which neither has his feelings nor can enter into them. Nor can he explain and defend them on considerations which all men, good and bad, can understand. He goes by a law which others know not; not his own wisdom or judgment, but by Christ's wisdom and the judgment of the Spirit, which is imparted to him,—by that inward incommunicable perception of truth and duty, which is the rule of his reason, affections, wishes, tastes, and all that is in him, and which is the result of persevering obedience. This it is which gives so unearthly a character to his whole life and conversation, which is "hid with Christ in God;" he has ascended with Christ on high, and there "in heart and mind continually dwells;" and he is obliged, in consequence, to put a veil upon his face, and is mysterious in the world's judgment, and "becomes as it were a monster unto many," though he be "wiser than the aged," and have "more understanding than his teachers, because he keeps God's commandments." Thus "he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man;" and with him "it is a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment," for "He that judgeth him is the Lord[1]."

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 15; iv. 3, 4.

One additional remark is necessary in conclusion, with reference to the subject with which I began, the duty of waiting for our Lord's coming. It must not be supposed, then, that this implies a neglect of our duties in this world. As it is possible to watch for Christ in spite of earthly reasonings to the contrary, so is it possible to engage in earthly duties, in spite of our watching. Christ has told us, that when He comes two men shall be in the field, two women at the mill, "the one shall be taken, and the other left." You see that good and bad are engaged in the same way; nor need it hinder any one from having his heart firmly fixed on God, that he is engaged in worldly business with those whose hearts are upon the world: Nay, we may form large plans, we may busy ourselves in new undertakings, we may begin great works which we cannot do more than begin; we may make provision for the future, and anticipate in our acts the certainty of centuries to come, yet be looking out for Christ. Thus indeed we are bound to proceed, and to leave "times and seasons in His Father's power." Whenever He comes, He will cut things short; and, for what we know, our efforts and beginnings, though they be nothing more, are just as necessary in the course of His Providence, as could be the most successful accomplishment. Surely, He will end the world abruptly, whenever He comes; He will break off the designs and labours of His elect, whatever they are, and give them what their dutiful anxiety aims at, though not through it. And, as He will end, so did He begin the world abruptly;

He began the world which we see, not from its first seeds and elements, but He created at once the herb and the fruit-tree perfect "whose seed is in itself," not a gradual formation, but a complete work. And with even a greater abruptness did He display His miracles when He came and new made all things, creating bread, not corn, for the supply of the five thousand, and changing water, not into any simpler, though precious liquid, but into wine. And as He began without beginning, so will He end without an ending; or rather, all that we do,—whatever we are doing,—whether we have time for more or time for less,—yet our work, finished or unfinished, will be acceptable, if done for Him. There is no inconsistency, then, in watching yet working, for we may work without setting our hearts on our work. Our sin will be if we idolize the work of our hands; if we love it so well as not to bear to part with it. The test of our faith lies in our being able to fail without disappointment.

Let us pray God to rule our hearts in this respect as well as in others; that "when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

# SERMON XIX.

## THE GOSPEL PALACES.

(WHITSUNTIDE.)

PSALM lxxviii. 69.

*"He built His sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which He hath established for ever."*

THERE was one occasion when our Saviour said, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. The hour cometh, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth[1]." Did we take these words by themselves, we might consider they implied, that, under the Gospel, there would be no outward tokens of religion, no rites and ordinances at all, no public services, no assemblings of ourselves together, and, especially, no sacred buildings. Such an inference, however, would be a great error, if it were only for this reason, that it has never been received, never acted on in any age of the Church; so far from it, that I suppose there are few indeed but would shrink

[1] John iv. 21. 23.

from the very mention of it, and none at all who could be found to testify that they had adopted it in their own case, yet had not suffered from it in point of inward devotion to God's service. That cannot be the true sense of Scripture, which never has been fulfilled, which ever has been contradicted and disobeyed; for God's word shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish His pleasure and prosper in His purpose. Our Saviour did *not* say to the Samaritan woman that there should be no places and buildings for worship under the Gospel, *because* He has *not* brought it to pass, *because* such ever have been, at all times and in all countries, and amid all differences of faith. And the same reasons which lead us to believe that religious edifices are a Christian ordinance, though so very little is said about them in Scripture, will also show that it is right and pious to make them enduring, and stately, and magnificent, and ornamental; so that our Saviour's declaration, when He foretold the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, was not that there should never be any other house built to His honour, but rather that there should be many houses; that they should be built, not merely at Jerusalem, or at Gerizim, but every where; what was under the Law a local ordinance, being henceforth a Catholic privilege, allowed not here and there, but wherever was the Spirit and the Truth. The glory of the Gospel is not the *abolition* of rites, but their *dissemination;* not their absence, but their living and efficacious presence through the grace of Christ. Accordingly, such passages as the text, though spoken in the times of the Law, are fulfilled even at this day,

and, as we trust, among ourselves. The Jewish Temple, indeed, of which the Psalmist spoke in the first instance, has come to nought; but he has a meaning still, and a noble one, as signifying the Christian institution of Churches.

"He built His sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which He hath established for ever." How much more strikingly and fully is this accomplished in our times than in those of the Law! Rich and "exceeding magnifical" as was Solomon's Temple, and built at the immediate command of God, it is not presumptuous surely to say that Christian Temples have as far surpassed it in size, beauty, and costliness, as in divine gifts and privileges, as in spirit and in truth. "He built His sanctuary like high palaces;" look through this very country,—compare its palaces with its Cathedrals and Churches, even in their present state of disadvantage, and say whether these words are not more than accomplished; so that the palaces of England should rather, by way of honour, be compared to the Cathedrals, than the Cathedrals to the palaces. And rightly so; for our first duty is towards our Lord and His Church, and our second towards our earthly Sovereign. And still more strikingly has the promise of permanence been fulfilled to us. For what were the years of Solomon's Temple? Four hundred. What of the second Temple? Six hundred. These were long periods, certainly; yet is it plain that the Church of Christ can more than equal them, and that in a great number of cases. Nay, there are Christian Temples in some parts of the world, which have lasted as much as fourteen hundred years. Surely,

then, when Christ multiplied His sacred palaces, He also gave them an extended age, bringing back under the Gospel the days of the Antediluvian patriarchs. The times are reversed, and a more vigorous life has been infused among us than at the first, and the reign of Christ and His saints has begun long since, and the Apostles fill their thrones in His Temples. "He hath built His sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which He hath established for ever."

Stability and permanence are, perhaps, the especial ideas which a Church brings before the mind. It represents, indeed, the beauty, the loftiness, the calmness, the mystery, and the sanctity of religion also, and that in many ways; still, I will say, more than all these, it represents to us its eternity. It is the witness of Him who is the beginning and the ending, the first and the last; it is the token and emblem of "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" it is the pledge of One, who has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," but "even to your old age I am He, and even to hoar hairs I will carry you." All ye who take part in the building of a Church, know that you have been admitted to the truest symbol of God's eternity. You have built what may be destined to have no end but in Christ's coming. Cast your thoughts back on the time when our ancient buildings were first reared. Consider the Churches all around us; how many generations have past since stone was put upon stone till the whole edifice was finished! The first movers and instruments of its erection, the minds that planned it, and the limbs that wrought at it, the pious hands that contributed to

it, and the holy lips that consecrated it, have long, long ago, been taken away; yet we benefit by their good deed. Does it not seem a very strange thing that *we* should be fed, and lodged, and clothed in spiritual things, by persons we never saw or heard of, and who never saw us, or could think of us, hundreds of years ago? Does it not seem strange that men should be able, not merely by acting on others, not by a continued influence carried on through many minds in a long succession, but by one simple and direct act, to come into contact with us, and as if with their own hand to benefit us, who live centuries later? What a visible, palpable specimen this, of the communion of saints! What a privilege thus to be immediately interested in the deeds of our forefathers! and what a call on us, in like manner, to reach out our own hands towards our posterity! Freely we have received; let us freely give. Let us not be slack to do what our fathers have done; to do a work, the fruits of which we cannot see, because they are too vast to be seen. If it were told us, that a word of ours, uttered by the mouth, should take, as it were, consistence, and float and continue in the air, and impart advice or comfort to men who were to live five hundred years to come, it would be an inspiring thought; and what but this is our very privilege, in the leave granted us to multiply the One Temple of God all over the earth, unto all time? It is to make our deeds live; it is to hold fellowship with the future.

See what a noble principle faith is. Faith alone lengthens a man's existence, and makes him, in his own feelings, live in the future and in the past. Men of

this world are full of plans of the day. Even in religion they are ever coveting immediate results, and will do nothing at all, unless they can do every thing,—can have their own way, choose their methods, and see the end. But the Christian throws himself fearlessly upon the future, because he believes in Him which is, and which was, and which is to come. He can endure to be one of an everlasting company while in this world, as well as in the next. He is content to begin, and break off; to do his part, and no more; to set about what others must accomplish; to sow where others must reap. None has finished his work, and cut it short in righteousness but He who is One. We, His members, who have but a portion of His fulness, execute but a part of His purpose. One lays the foundation, and another builds thereupon; one levels the mountain, and another "brings forth the headstone with shoutings." Thus were our Churches raised. One age would build a Chancel, and another a Nave, and a third would add a Chapel, and a fourth a Shrine, and a fifth a Spire. By little and little the work of grace went forward; and they could afford to take time about it, and be at pains to do it best, who had a promise that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. Powers of the earth rise and fall; revolutions come in course; great families appear, and are swept away; wise men are in high places, and walk amid the sparks which they have kindled. They *feel* that they are short-lived, and they determine to make the most of their time. They grasp and push forwards, they are busy and feverish, not only from the feebleness and waywardness of their nature,

but from the conviction of their reason, that they have but a short time. "Our time is short," say they; "let us buy and sell, and plant and build, and marry wives, and give in marriage, and eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Poor worms of the earth, it is too true of them! Their aims and desires, their instruments, their goods, their bodies, their souls, are all perishable. In the words of the wise man, "as soon as they are born, they *begin* to draw to an end[1]," they begin to die. Their growth and progress, their successes, are but the first stages of corruption and dissolution. Poor children of time, what are they? They triumph over religion in their day; they insult its ordinances and its ministers; they tyrannize in its Temples, showing themselves that they are gods. They carry away its massive stones to their own houses, and trick themselves out with its jewels. They build up their families by rapine and sacrilege; they are wanton when they are not covetous; and, when satiated with pillage, they mutilate and defile what they do not destroy. But, after all, how speaks the Psalmist? "I have said, Ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the Most Highest. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." "The proud have robbed, they have slept their sleep, and all the men whose hands were mighty have found nothing." "Fret not thyself because of the ungodly; neither be thou envious against the evil-doers; for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and be withered even as the green herb. I myself have seen the ungodly

[1] Wisdom v. 13.

in great power, and flourishing like a green bay tree; I went by, and lo, he was gone; I sought him, but his place could no where be found[1]." We rise in the morning, and, behold, they are all dead corpses. The storm has passed, the morning has broken, the Egyptians are cast on the sea-shore, God's Tabernacle is still standing. As though no violence had been in the night, no assaults of Satan and Antichrist, no arm of force, no envious or covetous eye, they remain, those holy places, where they were; for the Church abides for evermore, and her Temples, in their deep foundations, and their arching heights, are her image and manifestation.

I have said that the sacred edifices which we see around us, and in which we worship, remind us of their builders, though they lived so long ago; but in truth they remind us of a time far earlier even than theirs. Do we suppose that the very builders of these shrines were all in all in their building? Could any men whatever, did they but will it, at any time, build what they have built? is a Cathedral the offspring of a random thought, a thing to will and to accomplish at our pleasure? or rather, were not those builders merely the successors and the children of others long before them, who made them what they were, and enabled them, under God, to do works, which it was not given to every one to do, but only to the sons of such fathers? Surely the Churches which we inherit are not the purchase of wealth nor the creation of genius, they are the fruits of martyrdom. They come of high deeds and sufferings,

[1] Ps. lxxxii. 6, 7; lxxvi. 5; xxxvii. 1, 2. 36, 37.

as long before their very building as we are after it. Their foundations are laid very deep, even in the preaching of Apostles, and the confession of Saints, and the first victories of the Gospel in our land. All that is so noble in their architecture, all that captivates the eye and makes its way to the heart, is not a human imagination, but a divine gift, a moral result, a spiritual work. The Cross is ever planted in hazard and suffering, and is watered with tears and blood. No where does it take root and bear fruit, except its preaching be with self-denial. It is easy, indeed, for the ruling powers to make a decree, and set religion on high, and extend its range, and herald its name; but they cannot plant it, they can but impose it. The Church alone can plant the Church. The Church alone can found her sees, and inclose herself within walls. None but saintly men, mortified men, preachers of righteousness, and confessors for the truth, can create a home for the truth in any land. Thus the Temples of God are withal the monuments of His Saints, and we call them by their names while we consecrate them to His glory. Their simplicity, grandeur, solidity, elevation, grace, and exuberance of ornament, do but bring to remembrance the patience and purity, the courage, meekness, and great charity, the heavenly affections, the activity in well-doing, the faith and resignation, of men who themselves did but worship in mountains, and in deserts, and in caves and dens of the earth. They laboured, but not in vain, for other men entered into their labours; and, as if by natural consequence, at length their word prospered after them, and made itself a home, even these sacred palaces in which

it has so long dwelt, and which are still vouchsafed to us, in token, as we trust, that they too are still with us who spoke that word, and, with them, His Presence, who gave them grace to speak it.

O happy they, who, in a sorrowful time, avail themselves of this bond of communion with the Saints of old and with the Universal Church! O wise and dutiful, who, when the world has robbed them of so much, set the more account upon what remains! We have not lost all, while we have the dwelling-places of our forefathers; while we can repair those which are broken down, and build upon the old foundations, and propagate them upon new sites! Happy they, who when they enter within their holy limits, enter in heart into the court of heaven! And most unhappy, who, while they have eyes to admire, admire them only for their beauty's sake, and the skill they exhibit; who regard them as works of art, not fruits of grace; bow down before their material forms, instead of worshipping "in spirit and in truth;" count their stones, and measure their spaces, but discern in them no tokens of the invisible, no canons of truth, no lessons of wisdom, to guide them forward in the way heavenward!

In heaven is the substance, of which here below we are vouchsafed the image; and thither, if we be worthy, we shall at length attain. There is the holy Jerusalem, whose light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and whose wall is great and high, with twelve gates, and an Angel at each;— whose glory is the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

# SERMON XX.

## THE VISIBLE TEMPLE.

(WHITSUNTIDE.)

MATT. xxiii. 17.

*"Whether is greater, the gold, or the Temple that sanctifieth the gold?"*

A TEMPLE there has been upon earth, a spiritual Temple, made up of living stones, a Temple, as I may say, composed of souls; a Temple with God for its Light, and Christ for the High Priest, with wings of Angels for its arches, with Saints and Teachers for its pillars, and with worshippers for its pavement; such a Temple has been on earth ever since the Gospel was first preached. This unseen, secret, mysterious, spiritual Temple exists every where, throughout the kingdom of Christ, in all places, as perfect in one place as if it were not in another. Wherever there is faith and love, this Temple is; faith and love, with the Name of Christ, are as heavenly charms and spells, to make present to us this Divine Temple, in every part of Christ's kingdom. This Temple is invisible, but it is perfect and real because it is invisible, and gains nothing in

perfection by possessing visible tokens. There needs no outward building to meet the eye, in order to make it more of a Temple than it already is in itself. God, and Christ, and Angels, and souls, are not these a heavenly court, all perfect, to which this world can add nothing? Though faithful Christians worship without splendour, without show, in a homely and rude way, still their worship is as acceptable to God, as excellent, as holy, as though they worshipped in the public view of men, and with all the glory and riches of the world.

Such was the Church in its beginnings; "built upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone," "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." In the Apostles' lifetime it was poor and persecuted, and the holy Temple was all but invisible. There were no edifying rites, no various ceremonies, no rich music, no high Cathedrals, no mystic vestments, no solemn altars, no stone, or marble, or metals, or jewels, or woods of cost, or fine linen, to signify outwardly, and to honour duly, the heavenly Temple in which we stand and serve. The place where our Lord and Saviour first celebrated the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, was the upper room of a house, hired too or used for the occasion[1]; that in which the Apostles and the holy women waited for the promised coming of the Comforter, was also "an upper room[2];" and that also in which St. Paul preached at Troas, was an "upper chamber, where they were gathered together[3]." What other places of

[1] Mark xiv. 15. [2] Acts i. 13. [3] Acts xx. 8.

worship do we hear of? The water side, out in the open air; as at Philippi, where, we are told, "on the Sabbath," St. Paul and his companions "went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made[1]." And the sea shore; "They all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city; and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed[2]." And St. Peter was in prayer on the house-top; and St. Paul and St. Silas sang their hymns and psalms in prison, with their feet in the stocks; and St. Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert. Yet, wherever they were, whether in prison, or on the house-top, or in the wilderness, or by the river side, or on the sea shore, or in a private room, God and Christ were with them. The Spirit of Grace was there, the Temple of God was around them. They were come unto the mystical Sion, and to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, and to the spirits of the Just. There needed not gold, nor jewels, nor costly array for those, who had, what according to the text was greater, who had the Temple. It might be right and fitting, if possible, to have these precious things also, but it was not necessary; for which was the greater? Such things did not make the Temple more holy, but became themselves holy by being used for the Temple; the gold did not sanctify the Temple, but the Temple was greater, and sanctified the gold. Gold is a thing of nought without Christ's presence; and with His Presence, as in the days of His earthly ministry, it might be dispensed with.

[1] Acts xvi. 13. [2] Acts xxi. 5.

The case is the same as regards the immediate successors of the Apostles, who were in still more forlorn circumstances, as regards worship, than the Apostles themselves. The Christians who came after them, were obliged to worship in graves and tombs to save their lives from the persecutor. In the eastern and southern parts, where the Apostles and the first converts lived, before the glad sound of the Gospel had reached these northern and distant countries, they were accustomed to bury in caves dug out of the rock. Long galleries there are still remaining, in some places for miles underground, on each side of which the dead were placed. There the poor persecuted Christians met for worship, and that by night. Or the great people of the time built for themselves high and stately tombs above ground, as large as houses for the living; here too, in the darkness and solitude of night, did the Saints worship. Or in the depth of some wood, perhaps, where no one was likely to discover them. Such were the places in which the Invisible Temple manifested itself in times of heathenism; and who shall say that it wanted aught of outward show to make it perfect?

This is true and ever to be borne in mind; and yet no one can deny, on the other hand, that a great object of Christ's coming was to subdue this world, to claim it as His own, to assert His rights as its Master, to destroy the usurped dominion of the enemy, to show Himself to all men, and to take possession. He is that Mustard-tree which was destined silently to spread and overshadow all lands; He is that Leaven which was secretly to make its way through the mass of human opinions

and institutions till the whole was leavened. Heaven and earth had hitherto been separate. His gracious purpose was to make them one, and that by making earth like heaven. He was in the world from the beginning, and man worshipped other gods; he came into the world in the flesh, and the world knew Him not; He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But He came in order to *make* them receive Him, know Him, worship Him. He came to absorb this world into Himself; that, as He was light, so it might be light also. When He came, He had not a place to lay His head; but He came to make Himself a place, to make Himself a home, to make Himself houses, to fashion for Himself a glorious dwelling out of this whole world, which the powers of evil had taken captive. He came in the dark, in the dark night was He born, in a cave underground; in a cave where cattle were stabled, there was He housed; in a rude manger was He laid. There first He laid His head; but He meant not, blessed be His Name! He meant not there to remain for ever. He did not resign Himself to that obscurity; He came into that cave to leave it. The King of the Jews was born to claim the kingdom;—yea, rather, the Hope of all nations and the King of the whole earth, the King of kings and Lord of lords; and He gave not "sleep to His eyes or slumber to His eyelids," till He had changed His manger for a royal throne, and His grot for high palaces. Lift up your eyes, my brethren, and look around, for it is fulfilled at this day; yea, long ago, for many ages, and in many countries. "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath

hewn out her seven pillars." Where is the grot? where the stall for cattle? where the manger? where the grass and straw? where the unseemly furniture of that despised place? Is it possible that the Eternal Son should have been born in a hole of the earth? was the great miracle there wrought, whereby a pure and spotless Virgin brought forth God? Strange condescension undergone to secure a strange triumph! He purposed to change the earth, and He began "in the lowest pit, in a place of darkness, and in the deep." All was to be by Him renewed, and He availed Himself of nothing that was, that out of nothing He might make all things. He was not born in the Temple of Jerusalem; He abhorred the palace of David; He laid Himself on the damp earth in the cold night, a light shining in a dark place, till by the virtue that went out of Him, He should create a Temple worthy of His Name.

And lo, in omen of the future, even in His cradle, the rich and wise of the earth seek Him with gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, as an offering. And He puts aside the swaddling clothes, and takes instead "a coat without seam, woven from the top throughout." And He changes water into wine; and Levi feasts Him; and Zacchæus receives Him; and Mary anoints His head. Pass a few generations, and the whole face of things is changed; the earth is covered with His Temples; as it has been for ages. Go where you will, you find the eternal mountains hewn and fashioned into shrines where He may dwell, who was an outcast in the days of His flesh. Rivers and mines pay tribute

of their richest jewels; forests are searched for their choicest woods; the skill of man is put to task to use what nature furnishes. Go through the countries where His name is known, and you will find all that is rarest and most wonderful in nature or art has been consecrated to Him. King's palaces are poor, whether in architecture or in decoration, compared with the shrines which have been reared to Him. The Invisible Temple has become visible. As on a misty day, the gloom gradually melts and the sun brightens, so have the glories of the spiritual world lit up this world below. The dull and cold earth is penetrated by the rays. All around we see glimpses or reflections of those heavenly things, which the elect of God shall one day see face to face. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; "the Temple has sanctified the gold," and the prophecies made to the Church have been fulfilled to the letter. "The glory of Lebanon" has been "given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon." "The glory of Lebanon, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of His sanctuary, and to make the place of His feet glorious. The multitude of camels have covered it, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba have come; they have brought gold and incense, and shown forth the praises of the Lord." "The labour of Egypt, and merchandize of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature, have come over to it, in chains have they come over; they have fallen down, they have made supplication[1]."

[1] Isa. xxxv. 2; lx. 6. 13; xlv. 14.

And He has made Him a Temple, not only out of inanimate things, but of men also as parts of it. Not gold and silver, jewels and fine linen, and skill of man to use them, make the House of God, but worshippers, the souls and bodies of men, whom He has redeemed. Not souls alone, He takes possession of the whole man, body as well as soul; for St. Paul says, "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your *bodies* a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service[1]." And He claims us as His own, not one by one, but altogether, as one great company; for St. Peter says, that we "as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ[2]." All of us, and every one, and every part of every one, must go to make up His mystical body; for the Psalmist says, "O God, my heart is ready; I will sing and give praise with the best member that I have. Awake thou, lute and harp, I myself will awake right early. I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the people; I will sing praises unto Thee among the nations[3]." Our tongues must preach Him, and our voices sing of Him, and our knees adore Him, and our hands supplicate Him, and our heads bow before Him, and our countenances beam of Him, and our gait herald Him. And hence arise joint worship, forms of prayer, ceremonies of devotion, the course of services, orders of ministers, holy vestments, solemn music, and other things of a like nature; all which are,

[1] Rom. xii. 1. [2] 1 Pet. ii. 5. [3] Ps. cviii. 1—3.

as it were, the incoming into this world of the Invisible Kingdom of Christ, the fruit of its influence, the sample of its power, the earnest of its victories, the means of its manifestation.

Things temporal have their visible establishment. Kings' courts and palaces, councils and armies, have dazzled the multitude, and blinded them, till they worshipped them as idols. Such is our nature, we must have something to look up to. We cannot help admiring *something;* and if there is nothing good to admire, we admire what is bad. When then men see proud Babel set up on high with all her show and pomp, when they see or hear of great cities, with their stately mansions, the streets swarming with chariots and horses innumerable, and the shops filled with splendid wares, and great men and women richly dressed, with many attendants, and men crying, Bow the knee, and soldiers in bright array, with the sound of the trumpet, and other military music, and other things which one could mention, were it reverent to be particular,—simple men are tempted to look up to all this as the summit of perfection and blessedness, nay, as I have said, to worship what seems to them, though they do not so express it, the presence of the Unseen. Hence come in servility, coveting, jealousy, ambition; men wish to be great in this world, and try to be great; they aim at riches, or they lie in wait for promotion. Christ, then, in order to counteract this evil, has mercifully set up His own court and His own polity, that men might have something to fix their eyes upon of a more Divine and holy character than the world can supply; that poverty might

at least divide men's admiration with riches; that meekness might be set up on high as well as pride, and sanctity become our ambition as well as luxury. Saintly bishops with their clergy, officials of all kinds, religious bodies, austere Nazarites, prayer and praise without ceasing,—all this hath Christ mercifully set up, to outshine the fascinations of the world. So ran the promise: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night." "Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth; ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein. . . . Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands [1]." And these words began to have their fulfilment even from the time that Christ came; for, as I said when I began, St. Paul and St. Silas *sang* in the prison; and when he and his party left Tyre, the men, women, and children, who accompanied them out, *kneeled down* on the shore with them, and prayed. Such were the forms of worship in the beginning; till, as time went on, the Church, like some fair tree, put out her branches and foliage, and stood complete in all manner of holy symbols and spiritual ordinances, an outward sign of that unseen Temple in which Christ had dwelt from the first.

And now, in conclusion, let me observe, that such a

[1] Isa. lxii. 6; xlii. 10—12.

view as has been taken of the connexion of the ritual of religion with its spiritual and invisible power, will enable us to form a right estimate of things external, and keep us both from a curious and superstitious use, and an arrogant neglect of them. The Temple is greater than the gold; therefore care not though the gold be away:—it sanctifies it; therefore cherish the gold while it is present. Christ is with us, though there be no outward show; suppose all the comely appendages of our worship stripped off, yet where two or three are gathered together in His Name, He is in the midst of them. Be it a cottage, or the open fields, or even a prison or a dungeon, Christ can be there, and will be there, if His servants are there. You will ask whether this does not countenance persons who hold meetings apart from the Church, or who preach in the streets? No, it does not; because, in such cases, men do not meet together "in the Name of Christ." He says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name." Now, it does not follow that men *are* met in His Name because they say or think they are; for He warns us, "Many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many." Many a man *thinks* he is speaking in Christ's Name, when he is preaching his own doctrine. Christ did not send such men, yet they have run; and He owns them not, though they even worship in Church. In Church, or in the fields, would be the same in this matter. Stone walls do not make a Church. Though they were in the vastest, noblest, richest building on earth, still Christ would not be with those who preach another gospel than that

which He delivered once for all. This is the very point I am insisting on. It is the Temple which sanctifieth the gold; it is nothing but the invisible and heavenly Presence which sanctifieth any place or any thing. Magnificent or mean, costly or common, it alone sanctifies either worshippers or building. As it avails not to have sumptuous Churches without the Spirit of Christ, so it is but a mockery to have large congregations, eloquent preachers, and much excitement, if that gracious Spirit is away. But where He really places His *Name*, there, be the spot a palace or a cottage, it is sacred and glorious. He who once lay in a manger, will still condescend to manifest Himself any where, as He did in primitive times. No indignities can be done to Him who inhabiteth eternity. "Heaven is His throne, and earth His footstool;" "the very heaven of heavens cannot contain Him;" much less any house which we can build. High or low is alike to Him.

This is an obvious and very comfortable reflection, when we think of the great irreverences and profanations which sometimes take place in Church. Men come in lightly and thoughtlessly; they care not to uncover their heads; they talk, and laugh, and even sing, as if they were in a common building; or, when there is any needful work to be done in it, and tools and other implements are brought in, they seem to think as if, all of a sudden, it were turned into an unconsecrated place, because it is necessary to exercise a trade in it. Or, perhaps, if it so happen, they turn aside into it at other times, and think that God is not there, because man is not there to see them. And so

again, when we go into certain Churches, and see the neglected state in which they are left, the font cast aside, or, if not, used as a place to keep any sort of litter in; and the Holy Table mean and unsightly, with a miserable covering, and the pavement defiled and broken, and the whole building in a state of neglect, of which any neat person would be ashamed even in his own cottage (to say nothing what wealthy people would feel, if their rooms were left in such a condition); I say, when these and such like sights meet us, perhaps, for an instant, we are tempted to say, Can Christ be here? Can the Holy Spirit deign to sanctify water for the washing away of sins, brought in, as it is, with such irreverence of manner, and in so mean a vessel? Or, can the life-giving Presence and the sacrificial power of Christ be upon that Altar? nay, can it *be* an Altar, which is so wretched to look upon? But, I ask, or rather, any one will ask himself, on second thoughts, Could Christ be in a manger? Doubtless then He, whom the Angels of God worshipped as the Only-begotten, when brought into the world in a place for cattle, can be manifested, can be worshipped, in the most neglected Church. No; our distress must not be at all for *Him;* such would be superstitious and carnal; our distress must be for the insult offered Him, and so far as there is insult. If the state of neglect I am speaking of is no one's fault, then distress there must be none. But if there be blame, then we may and must feel distress, that our Lord should be insulted by His own servants; and yet more on their account, that they should insult Him. They who profane His Presence, who treat its resting-place as a

common house, and make free with it, these men do not hurt Christ, but they hurt themselves. The Temple is greater than the gold.

And, while He is displeased with the profane, He accepts such offerings as are made in faith, whether they be greater or less. He accepts our gold and our silver, not to honour Himself thereby, but in mercy to us. When Mary poured the ointment upon His head, it was her advantage, not His; He praised her, and said, "She hath done what she could." Every one must do his best; he must pray his best, he must sing his best, he must attend his best. If we did all, it would be little, not worthy of Him; if we do little, it may suffice to show our faith, and He in His mercy will accept whatever we can offer. He will accept, what we prefer giving to Him to giving to ourselves. When, instead of spending money on our own homes, we spend it on His house, when we prefer that He should have the gold and silver to our having it, we do not make our worship more spiritual, but we bring Christ nearer to us; we show that we are in earnest, we evidence our faith. It requires very little of true faith and love, to feel an unwillingness to spend money on one's self. Fine dresses, fine houses, fine furniture, fine establishments, are painful to a true Christian; they create misgivings in his mind whether his portion is with the Saints or with the world. Rather he will feel it suitable to lay out his money in God's service, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to educate the young, to spread the knowledge of the truth; and, among other pious objects, to build and to decorate the visible House of God.

"Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof[1]." Such was Nehemiah's prayer, when he had been stirred up to cleanse the sanctuary. May God remember us also, if in any measure His grace has moved us to similar acts of zeal for His glory! And, O may He in His mercy grant that our outward show does not outstrip our inward progress; that whatever gift, rare or beautiful, we introduce here, may be but a figure of inward beauty and unseen sanctity ornamenting our hearts! Hearts are the true shrine wherein Christ must dwell. "The King's daughter is all-glorious within;" and when we are repenting of past sin, and cleansing ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord, then, and then only, may we safely employ ourselves in brightening, embellishing, and making glorious the dwelling-place of His invisible Presence, doing it with that severity, gravity, and awe, which a chastened heart and sober thoughts will teach us.

[1] Neh. xiii. 14.

# SERMON XXI.

## OFFERINGS FOR THE SANCTUARY.

(WHITSUNTIDE.)

ISAIAH lx. 13.

*"The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of My Sanctuary; and I will make the place of My feet glorious."*

EVERY attentive reader of Scripture must be aware what stress is there laid upon the duty of costliness and magnificence in the public service of God. Even in the first rudiments of the Church, Jacob, an outcast and wanderer, after the vision of the Ladder of Angels, thought it not enough to bow down before the Unseen Presence, but parted with, or, as the world would say, wasted a portion of the provisions he had with him for the way, in an act of worship. Like David, he did not "offer unto the Lord of that which cost him nothing;" but like that religious woman at the opening of a more gracious Covenant, though he had not "an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious," yet he did "what he could;" making a sacrifice less than hers in its costliness, greater in his own destitute condition, for

he "took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it[1]."

What Jacob did as a solitary pilgrim, David as a wealthy king, Mary as a private woman, is pressed upon us both in sacred history and in prophecy, as fulfilled under the Law, as foretold of the Gospel. The Book of Exodus shows what cost was lavished upon the Tabernacle even in the wilderness; the Books of Kings and Chronicles set before us the devotion of heart, the sedulous zeal, the carelessness of expense or toil, with which the first Temple was reared upon Mount Sion, in the commencement of the monarchy of Israel. "Now have I prepared," says David, "*with all my might* for the house of my God, the gold . . and the silver . . and the brass . . the iron . . and wood . . onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. Moreover, because I *have set my affection* to the house of my God, I have *of my own proper good*, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the Holy House." And he "rejoiced with great joy," and "blessed the Lord," because the people also "*offered willingly*, because *with perfect heart* they offered willingly to the Lord." And Solomon, when he came to use these costly offerings, sent to another country for "a cunning man," "skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in

[1] Gen. xxviii. 18.

timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which should be put to him, with the cunning men in Judah and in Jerusalem[1]." Such was the outward splendour of the Jewish Sanctuary; nor were the glories of the Christian to be less outward and visible, though they were to be more spiritual also. The words of the Prophet in the text are but one instance out of several, of the promise of temporal magnificence made to that Covenant which was to be eternal. "The glory of Lebanon," says Isaiah, addressing the Gospel Church, "shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of My Sanctuary; and I will make the place of My feet glorious." Again; "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron; thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." And again; "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones[2]." Now if it be said that some of these expressions are figurative, this may be true; but still the very fact that such figures are used in the prophecy, would seem to show that the materials literally denoted may be suitably used in its fulfilment, unless, indeed, such use is actually forbidden. They do not cease to be figures because they are actually present as well as spoken of. Real gold is

[1] 1 Chron. xxix. 2, 3. 9, 10. 2 Chron. ii. 7. 14.

[2] Isa. lx. 17, 18; liv. 11, 12.

as much a figure in the Church, as the mention of it is such in Scripture; and it is surely in itself dutiful and pleasant thus to make much of the words of inspired truth; and, moreover, the mere circumstance that, when the Gospel came, Christians did thus proceed, and sanctified the precious things of this world to religious uses, looks like the fulfilment of the prophecy, and is of the nature of an authoritative command.

However, it may be objected that every attentive reader of Scripture will be familiar with this circumstance also, that such outward splendour in the worship of God is spoken of in terms of censure or jealousy by our Lord and Saviour. Thus He says, when enumerating the offences of the Pharisees, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the *outside* of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess." And again, "Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." And when His disciples pointed out to our Lord the great size of the stones of which the Temple was built,—a Temple, let it be noted, thus ornamented by the impious Herod,—He answered abruptly, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down[1]."

These passages certainly should be taken into account; but what do they mean? did our Saviour say that magnificence in worshipping God, magnificence in His house, in its furniture, and in its decorations, is wrong, wrong

[1] Matt. xxiii. 25. 27; xxiv. 2.

since He has come into the world? Does He discourage us from building handsome Churches, or beautifying the ceremonial of religion? Did He exhort us to niggardness? did He put a slight on architectural skill? did He imply we should please Him the more, the less study and trouble we gave to the externals of worship? In rejecting the offering of Herod, did He forbid the devotion of Christians?

This is what many persons think. I do not exaggerate when I say, that they think the more homely and familiar their worship is, the more spiritual it becomes. And they argue, that to aim at external beauty in the service of the Sanctuary, is to be like the Pharisees, to be fair without and hollow within; that whereas the Pharisees pretended a sanctity and religiousness outside which they had not inside, therefore, every one who aims at outward religion sacrifices to it inward.

This is a consideration worth dwelling on; not indeed for its own weight, but because it weighs with so many people. The objection is this; because the hollow Pharisees were outwardly holy, therefore every one who shows any outward holiness is, or is in danger of becoming, a Pharisee.

Now, to take a parallel instance, most of us perhaps have heard a proverb, that "cleanliness is next to godliness;" which means, that the habit spoken of is of a moral nature, at least accidentally, and is a moral excellence, and that those who are deficient in it are commonly deficient also in other and more religious excellences also. Who among us will not admit that nothing is more unwelcome, nay, under circumstances, nothing

raises more serious and anxious thoughts, than the absence of neatness and what is called tidiness, in appearance and dress? We can often tell at once how young persons are conducting themselves by the first glance at them. Alas! we read what is painful in their history; we read of a change in their religious state in the disorder of their look and the negligence of their gait. Or enter a village school: are we not at once pleased with a neat and bright-faced child? and do we not at once take a dislike to such as are not so?

But, now, suppose any one were to come to us and say, "This is all outside; what God requires is a clean heart, not a neat appearance:" would this seem a pertinent objection? We should answer surely, that what our duty requires of us is cleanness of heart *and* decency of attire also; that the one point of duty does not interfere with the other; nay, on the contrary, that inward exactness and sanctity are likely to *show* themselves in this very way,—in propriety of appearance; and that if persons who are exact in their lives are, notwithstanding, negligent in their persons, this ought not to be so, and we wish it were otherwise.

But supposing the objector went on to say that those who were neat and respectable in their persons and homes had often very bad tempers, were ever making a *point* of being neat, and what is called "particular," and quarrelled with every one who interfered with their own habits and ways: We should answer, that if so, it was to be lamented; but still, in spite of this, it was a right thing to be neat, and a wrong thing to be slovenly; that exactness within best showed itself in exactness

without, and that cleanliness was the natural and most appropriate attendant on godliness.

And again; supposing the objector in question said that propriety in dress became love of finery; that those who attended to their persons became vain; that it was impossible to be neat and respectable without going on to dress gaily, and making a show to attract the attention of others. We should answer that all this ought not to be, and was very wrong; that vanity was a great sin; that those who studied their dress disobeyed our Lord's command not to think about raiment, and were exposing themselves to temptations, and were going forth they knew not whither, going the way of death, going the way to become reckless, as about greater matters, so about dress itself. This we should say; but we should add, that such considerations did not prove that neatness and decency were not praiseworthy, but that love of finery was perilous, and vanity sinful.

But supposing the objector supported what he said by Scripture: supposing he said, for instance, that our Lord blamed persons who washed their hands before eating bread, and that this proves that washing the hands before a meal is wrong. I am taking no fictitious case; such objections really have been made before now: yet the answer surely is easy, namely, that our Saviour objected, not to the mere washing of the hands, but to the making too much of such an observance; to our thinking it religion, thinking that it would stand in the stead of inward religion, and would make up for sins of the heart. This is what He condemned, the show of great attention to outward things, *while* inward things,

which were more important, were neglected. This, He says Himself, in His denunciation of the Pharisees, "These ought ye to have done," He says, "*and not* to leave the other," the inward, "*undone.*" He says expressly they ought to do the outward, but they ought to do more. They did the one and not the other; they ought to have done both the one and the other.

Now, apply this to the case of beautifying Churches: —as is neatness and decency in an individual, such is decoration in a Church; and as we should be offended at slovenliness in an individual, so ought we to be offended at disorder and neglect in our Churches. It is quite true, men *are* so perverse (as the Pharisees were) that they sometimes attend only to the outward forms, and neglect the inward spirit; they may offer to Him costly furniture and goodly stones, while they are cruel or bigoted;—just as persons may be neat in their own persons and houses, and yet be ill-tempered and quarrelsome. Or, again, they may carry their attention to the outward forms of religion too far, and become superstitious; just as persons may carry on a love of neatness into love of finery. And, moreover, Scripture speaks against the hypocrisy of those who are religious outwardly, while they live in sin,—just as it speaks against those who wash their hands, while their heart is defiled. But still, in spite of all this, propriety in appearance and dress is a virtue,—is next to godliness; and, in like manner, decency and reverence are to be observed in the worship of God, and are next to devotion, in spite of its being true that not all are holy who are grave and severe, not all devout who are munificent.

What Scripture reproves is the *inconsistency*, or what it more solemnly called the *hypocrisy* of being fair without and foul within; of being religious in appearance, not in truth. It was one offence not to be religious, it was a second offence to pretend to be religious. "Ye fools," says our Lord, "did not He that made that which is without, make that which is within also?" Such as a man is outwardly, such should he be inwardly. "How can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things[1]." The light of Divine truth, when in the heart, ought to beam forth outwardly; and when a man is dark within, well were it that he should show himself outwardly what he is. Such as a man is inside, such should be his outside. Well; but do you not see that such a view of doctrine condemns not only those who affect outward religion without inward, but those also who affect inward without outward? For, if it is an inconsistency to pretend to religion outwardly, while we neglect it inwardly, it is also an inconsistency, surely, to neglect it outwardly while we pretend to it inwardly. It is wrong, surely, to believe and not to profess; wrong to put our light under a bushel. St. Paul says expressly, "If thou shalt *confess with thy mouth* the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved[2]." Belief is not enough; we must confess. Nor must we confess

[1] Luke xi. 40. Matt. xii. 34, 35. [2] Rom. x. 9.

with our mouth only; but by word and by deed, by speech and by silence, by doing and by not doing, by walk and conversation, when in company and when alone, in time and in place, when we labour and when we rest, when we lie down and when we rise up, in youth and in age, in life and in death,—and, in like manner, in the world and in Church. Now, to adorn the worship of God our Saviour, to make the beauty of holiness visible, to bring offerings to the Sanctuary, to be curious in architecture, and reverent in ceremonies,—all this external religion is a sort of profession and confession; it is nothing but what is natural, nothing but what is consistent, in those who are cultivating the life of religion within. It is most unbecoming, most offensive, in those who are not religious; but most becoming, most necessary, in those who are so.

Persons who put aside gravity and comeliness in the worship of God, that they may pray more spiritually, forget that God is a Maker of *all* things, *visible* as well as invisible; that He is the Lord of our bodies as well as of our souls; that He is to be worshipped in public as well as in secret. The Creator of this world is none other than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; there are not two Gods, one of matter, one of spirit; one of the Law, and one of the Gospel. There is one God, and He is Lord of all we are, and all we have; and, therefore, all we do must be stamped with His seal and signature. We must begin, indeed, with the heart; for out of the heart proceed all good and evil; but while we begin with the heart, we must not end with the heart. We must not give up this visible world, as if it

came of the evil one. It is our duty to change it into the kingdom of heaven. We must manifest the kingdom of heaven upon earth. The light of Divine truth must proceed *from* our hearts, and shine out *upon* every thing we are, and every thing we do. It must bring the *whole* man, soul and body, into captivity to Christ. They who are holy in spirit, are holy in body. They who submit their wills to Christ, bow their bodies; they who offer the heart, bow the knee; they who have faith in His Name, bow the head; they who honour His cross inwardly, are not ashamed of it before men. They who rejoice *with* their brethren in their common salvation, and desire to worship together, *build a place* to worship in, and they build it as the *expression* of their feelings, of their mutual love, of their common reverence. They build a building which will, as it were, speak; which will profess and confess Christ their Saviour; which will herald forth His death and passion at first sight; which will remind all who enter that we are saved by His cross, and must bear our cross after Him. They will build what may tell out their deepest and most sacred thoughts, which they dare not utter in word: not a misshapen building, not a sordid building, but a noble dwelling, a palace all-glorious within; unfit, indeed, for God's high Majesty, whom even the heaven of heavens cannot contain, but fit to express the feelings of the builders,—a monument which may stand and (as it were) preach to all the world while the world lasts; which may show how they desire to praise, bless, and glorify their eternal Benefactor; how they desire to get others to praise Him

also; a Temple which may cry out to all passers by, "Oh, magnify the Lord our God, and fall down before His footstool, for He is Holy! Oh, magnify the Lord our God, and worship Him upon His holy hill, for the Lord our God is Holy[1]!"

This, then, is the real state of the case; and when our Lord blamed the Pharisees as hypocrites, it was not for attending to the outside of the cup, but for not attending to the inside also.

Now, in answer to the parallel I have been drawing out, it may be objected, that "if the decoration of God's public service be like the personal duty of propriety in dress and demeanour, then decoration is wrong when it is intentional and studied. Those who are anxious how they look, and what others think of them, are in the way to be vain, if they are not so already; decorum should be the *spontaneous* result of inward exactness; grace in manner and apparel should be the mere outward image of harmony and purity of soul. Therefore, holy persons attire themselves with simplicity, speak with modesty, behave with gravity. Their ease, and their amiableness, and their gentleness, and their composure, and their majesty, are as little known to themselves as the features of their countenance. If, then, the parallel holds, external religion becomes excessive as soon as it is made an object; and this, of course, becomes practically an argument against all consecration of wealth and of art to the worship of God." One single remark, however, is sufficient to invalidate this objection; for, let it be observed, in making much of our own appear-

[1] Ps. xcix. 5. 9.

ance, we are contemplating ourselves; but in making much of the ceremonial of religion, we are contemplating another, and Him our Maker and Redeemer. This is so obvious and decisive a distinction, that I should not care to notice the objection to which it is an answer, except that it will open upon us a further consideration connected with our subject. For it so happens that, at present, far from acknowledging its force, it is the way of the world to be most sensitively jealous of over-embellishment in the worship of God, while it has no scruples or misgivings whatever at an excess of splendour and magnificence in its own apparel, houses, furniture, equipages, and establishments.

I say it is the way with us Englishmen, who are the richest people upon earth, to lay out our wealth upon ourselves; and when the thought crosses our minds, if it ever does, that such an application of God's bounties is unworthy those who are named after Him who was born in a stable, and died upon the Cross, we quiet them by asking, "What is the use of all the precious things which God has given us, if we may not enjoy them? The earth overflows with beauty and richness, and man is gifted with skill to improve and perfect what he finds in it. What delicate and costly things do the streets of any rich town present to our eyes! what bales of merchandize! what fine linen! what silks from afar! what precious metals! what jewels! what choice marbles! and what exquisite workmanship, making what is in itself excellent, of double worth! What," it is inquired, "*can* be done with all this bounty of Provi-

dence? has He not poured it all lavishly into our hands? was it given except to be used? And what is true of the more precious things, is true of the less precious; it is true of such things as come in the way of ordinary persons; the luxuries of opulence are, in their degree, offered to all of us, as if we were opulent, for we partake in the common opulence of our country; why, then, may we not enjoy the gifts of nature and art, which God has given?"

I have already suggested the true answer to this difficulty. The earth is full of God's wonderful works, do you say, and what are we to do with them? what to do with marbles and precious stones, gold and silver, and fine linen? Give them to God. Render them to Him from whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things. This is their proper destination. Is it a better thing to dress up our sinful bodies in silk and jewels, or to ornament therewith God's House and God's ritual? Does any one doubt what all these excellent things are meant for? or, at least, can he doubt what they are *not* meant for? not meant, surely, for sinners to make themselves fine withal. What presumption would that be, what senselessness! Does not the whole world speak in praise of God? Does not every star in the sky, every tree and flower upon earth, all that grows, all that endures, the leafy woods, the everlasting mountains, speak of God? Do not the pearls in the sea, and the jewels in the rocks, and the metals in the mine, and the marbles in the quarry,—do not all rich and beautiful substances every where witness of Him who made them? Are they not His work, His token, His glory? Are they

not a portion of a vast natural Temple, the heavens, earth, and sea,—a vast Cathedral for the Bishop of our souls, the All-sufficient Priest, who first created all things, and then again, became, by purchase, their Possessor? Does it not strike you, then, as extreme presumption, and a sort of sacrilege, to consecrate them to any one's glory but God's? If we saw things aright, could there be a more frightful spectacle, an instance of more complete self-worship, a more detestable idolatry, than men and women making themselves fine that others might admire them? keeping all these things for self, denying them to the rightful Owner? viewing them as if mere works of "nature," as they are sometimes called, and incapable of any religious purpose? Recollect Herod; he was smitten by the Angel and eaten of worms, because he gave not God the glory; and *how* did he withhold it? By arraying himself in royal apparel, making an oration, and being patient of the cry, "It is the voice of a god and not of a man." The royal apparel was imputed to him as a sin, because he used it, not to remind himself that he was God's minister, but to impress upon the people that he was a god. And every one, high and low, who is in the practice of dressing ostentatiously, whether in silk or in cotton, that is, every one who dresses to be looked at and admired, is using God's gifts for an idol's service, and offering them up to self.

No; let us master this great and simple truth, that all rich materials and productions of this world, being God's property, are intended for God's service; and sin only, nothing but sin, turns them to a different purpose.

All things are His; He in His bounty has allowed us to take freely of all that is in the world, for food, clothing, and lodging; He allows us a large range, He afflicts us not by harsh restrictions; He gives us a discretionary use, for which we are answerable to Him alone. Still, after all permission, on the whole we must not take what we do not need. We may take for life, for comfort, for enjoyment; not for luxury, not for pride. Let us give Him of His own, as David speaks; let us honour Him, and not ourselves. Let the house of God be richly adorned, for it is His dwelling-place; priests, for they represent Him; kings, magistrates, judges, heads of families, for they are His ministers. These are called gods in Scripture, and "all that is called God or that is worshipped," may receive of His gifts whose Name they bear. Nothing, however rich, is sinful, which has a religious meaning; which reminds us of God,—or of the absent, whom we revere or love,—or of relations or friends departed; or which is a gift, and not a purchase. In proportion as we disengage it from the thought of self, and associate it with piety towards others, do we succeed in sanctifying it.

Hence it is that while Abraham sent jewels to Rebekah, and Jacob made Joseph a coat of many colours, St. Paul gives his judgment "that women adorn themselves with shamefacedness and sobriety, *not* with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array;" and St. Peter, that their "adorning" should not be "that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man

of the heart[1]." Or again; compare the Book of Ezekiel with the Apocalypse, and you will see the right and the wrong use of earthly magnificence instanced in the city of Antichrist and Holy Jerusalem. God's judgments are denounced upon Tyre by the Prophet, for being proud of her wealth and spending it on herself. "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering; the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the carbuncle, and gold." And what followed or was involved in this? "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness; I will cast thee to the ground." On the other hand, of new Jerusalem we read also, that the foundations of her wall "were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third a chalcedony, the fourth an emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth a topaz, the tenth a chrysoprasus, the eleventh a jacinth, the twelfth an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold as it were transparent glass." And all this suitably; for it was God's city, "and the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof[2]."

Let us then, from what has been said, on the whole, learn this lesson:—to be at least as exact and as decent in the service of God, as we are in our own persons and

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

[2] Ezek. xxviii. 13. 17. Rev. xxi. 19—23.

our own homes; and if we are in possession of precious things besides, let us rather devote them to God than keep them for ourselves. And let us never forget that all we can give, though of His creation, is worthless in comparison of the more precious gifts which He bestows on us in the Gospel. Though our Font and Altar were of costly marbles, though our communion vessels were of gold and jewels, though our walls were covered with rich tapestries, what is all this compared to Christ, the Son of God and Son of man, present here, but unseen! Let us use visible things not to hide, but to remind us of things invisible; and let us pray Him, that while we cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, He will give us the Living Bread from heaven, and the Wine, which is His Blood.

# SERMON XXII.

## THE WEAPONS OF SAINTS.

(WHITSUNTIDE.)

MATT. xix. 30.

*"Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first."*

THESE words are fulfilled under the Gospel in many ways. Our Saviour in one place applies them to the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles; but in the context, in which they stand as I have cited them, they seem to have a further meaning, and to embody a great principle, which we all indeed acknowledge, but are deficient in mastering. Under the dispensation of the Spirit all things were to become new and to be reversed. Strength, numbers, wealth, philosophy, eloquence, craft, experience of life, knowledge of human nature, these are the means by which worldly men have ever gained the world. But in that kingdom which Christ has set up, all is contrariwise. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." What was before in honour, has been dishonoured; what

before was in dishonour, has come to honour; what before was successful, fails; what before failed, succeeds. What before was great, has become little; what before was little, has become great. Weakness has conquered strength, for the hidden strength of God "is made perfect in weakness." Death has conquered life, for in that death is a more glorious resurrection. Spirit has conquered flesh; for that spirit is an inspiration from above. A new kingdom has been established, not merely different from all kingdoms before it, but contrary to them; a paradox in the eyes of man,—the visible rule of the invisible Saviour.

This great change in the history of the world is foretold or described in very many passages of Scripture. Take, for instance, St. Mary's Hymn, which we read every evening; she was no woman of high estate, the nursling of palaces and the pride of a people, yet she was chosen to an illustrious place in the Kingdom of heaven. What God began in her was a sort of type of His dealings with His Church. So she spoke of His "scattering the proud," "putting down the mighty," "exalting the humble and meek," "filling the hungry with good things," and "sending the rich empty away." This was a shadow or outline of that Kingdom of the Spirit, which was then coming on the earth.

Again; when our Lord, in the beginning of His ministry, would declare the great principles and laws of His Kingdom, after what manner did He express Himself? Turn to the Sermon on the Mount. "He opened His mouth and said, Blessed are the poor in

spirit, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the meek, blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake[1]." Poverty was to bring into the Church the riches of the Gentiles; meekness was to conquer the earth; suffering was "to bind their kings in chains, and their nobles with links of iron."

On another occasion He added the counterpart; "Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation; woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger; woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep; woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets[2]."

St. Paul addresses the Corinthians in the same tone: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence[3]."

Once more; consider the Book of Psalms, which, if any part of the Old Testament, belongs immediately to Gospel times, and is the voice of the Christian Church; what is the one idea in that sacred book of devotion from beginning to end? This: that the weak, the oppressed, the defenceless shall be raised to rule

[1] Matt. v. 2—10. [2] Luke vi. 24—26. [3] 1 Cor. i. 26—29.

the world in spite of its array of might, its threats, and its terrors; that "the first shall be last, and the last first."

Such is the kingdom of the sons of God; and while it endures, there is ever a supernatural work going on by which all that man thinks great is overcome, and what he despises prevails.

Yes, so it is; since Christ sent down gifts from on high, the Saints are ever taking possession of the kingdom, and with the weapons of Saints. The invisible powers of the heavens, truth, meekness, and righteousness, are ever coming in upon the earth, ever pouring in, gathering, thronging, warring, triumphing, under the guidance of Him who "is alive and was dead, and is alive for evermore." The beloved disciple saw Him mounted on a white horse, and going forth "conquering and to conquer." "And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations, and He shall rule them with a rod of iron[1]."

Now let us apply this great truth to ourselves; for be it ever recollected, *we* are the sons of God, *we* are the soldiers of Christ. The kingdom is within us, and among us, and around us. We are apt to speak of it as a matter of history; we speak of it as at a distance; but really we are a part of it, or ought to be; and, as we wish to be a living portion of it, which is our only hope of salvation, we must learn what its

[1] Rev. xix. 14, 15.

characters are in order to imitate them. It is the characteristic of Christ's Church, that the first should be last, and the last first; are we realizing in ourselves and taking part in this wonderful appointment of God?

Let me explain what I mean:—We have most of us by nature longings more or less, and aspirations, after something greater than this world can give. Youth, especially, has a natural love of what is noble and heroic. We like to hear marvellous tales, which throw us out of things as they are, and introduce us to things that are not. We so love the idea of the invisible, that we even build fabrics in the air for ourselves, if heavenly truth be not vouchsafed us. We love to fancy ourselves involved in circumstances of danger or trial, and acquitting ourselves well under them. Or we imagine some perfection, such as earth has not, which we follow, and render it our homage and our heart. Such is the state more or less of young persons before the world alters them, before the world comes upon them, as it often does very soon, with its polluting, withering, debasing, deadening influence, before it breathes on them, and blights and parches, and strips off their green foliage, and leaves them, as dry and wintry trees without sap or sweetness. But in early youth we stand with our leaves and blossoms on which promise fruit; we stand by the side of the still waters, with our hearts beating high, with longings after our unknown good, and with a sort of contempt for the fashions of the world; with a contempt for the world, even though we engage in it. Even though we allow ourselves in our degree to listen to it, and

to take part in its mere gaieties and amusements, yet we feel the while that our happiness is not there; and we have not yet come to think, though we are in the way to think, that all that is beyond this world is after all an idle dream. We are on our way to think it, for no one stands where he was; his desires after what he has not, his earnest thoughts after things unseen, if not fixed on their true objects, catch at something which he does see, something earthly and perishable, and seduce him from God. But I am speaking of men *before* that time, before they have given their hearts to the world, which promises them true good, then cheats them, and then makes them believe that there is no truth any where, and that they were fools for thinking it. But before that time, they have desires after things above this world, which they embody in some form of this world, because they have no other way at all of realizing them. If they are in humble life, they dream of becoming their own masters, rising in the world, and securing an independence; if in a higher rank, they have ambitious thoughts of gaining a name and exercising power. While their hearts are thus unsettled, Christ comes to them, if they will receive Him, and promises to satisfy their great need, this hunger and thirst which wearies them. He does not wait till they have learned to ridicule high feelings as mere romantic dreams: He comes to the young; He has them baptized betimes, and then promises them, and in a higher way, those unknown blessings which they yearn after. He seems to say, in the words of the Apostle, "What ye

ignorantly worship, that declare I unto you." You are seeking what you see not, I give it you; you desire to be great, I will make you so; but observe how,—just in the reverse way to what you expect; the way to real glory is to become unknown and despised.

He says, for instance, to the aspiring, as to His two Apostles, "Whoseover will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister[1]." Here is our rule. The way to mount up is to go down. Every step we take downward, makes us higher in the kingdom of heaven. Do you desire to be great? make yourselves little. There is a mysterious connexion between real advancement and self-abasement. If you minister to the humble and despised, if you feed the hungry, tend the sick, succour the distressed; if you bear with the froward, submit to insult, endure ingratitude, render good for evil, you are, as by a divine charm, getting power over the world and rising among the creatures. God has established this law. Thus He does His wonderful works. His instruments are poor and despised; the world hardly knows their names, or not at all. They are busied about what the world thinks petty actions, and no one minds them. They are apparently set on no great works; nothing is seen to come of what they do: they seem to fail. Nay, even as regards religious objects which they themselves profess to desire, there is no natural and visible connexion

[1] Matt. xx. 26—28.

between their doings and sufferings and these desirable ends; but there is an unseen connexion in the kingdom of God. They rise by falling. Plainly so, for no condescension *can* be so great as that of our Lord *Himself*. Now the more they abase themselves the more *like* they are to Him; and the more like they are to Him, the greater must be their power with Him.

When we once recognize this law of God's providence we shall understand better, and be more desirous to imitate, our Lord's precepts, such as the following:—

"Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." And then our Lord adds, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them[1]." As if He should say to us of this day, You know well that the Gospel was at the first preached and propagated by the poor and lowly against the world's power; you know that fishermen and publicans overcame the world. You know it; you are fond of bringing it forward as an evidence of the truth of the Gospel, and of enlarging on it as something striking, and a topic for many words; happy are ye if ye yourselves fulfil it; happy are ye if *ye* carry on the work of those fishermen; if ye in your generation follow them as they followed

[1] John xiii. 13—17.

Me, and triumph over the world and ascend above it by a like self-abasement.

Again, "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; . . . but when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee; for whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted[1]." Here is a rule which extends to whatever we do. It is plain that the spirit of this command leads us, as a condition of being exalted hereafter, to cultivate here all kinds of little humiliations; instead of loving display, putting ourselves forward, seeking to be noticed, being loud or eager in speech, and bent on having our own way, to be content, nay, to rejoice in being made little of, to perform what to the flesh are servile offices, to think it enough to be barely suffered among men, to be patient under calumny; not to argue, not to judge, not to pronounce censures, unless a plain duty comes in; and all this because our Lord has said that such conduct is the very way to be exalted in His presence.

Again, "I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also[2]." What a precept is this? why is this voluntary degradation? what good can come to it? is it not an extravagance? Not to *resist* evil is going far; but to court it, to turn the left cheek to the aggressor

[1] Luke xiv. 8. 10, 11.

[2] Matt. v. 39.

and to offer to be insulted! what a wonderful command! What? must we take pleasure in indignities? Surely we must; however difficult it be to understand it, however arduous and trying to practise it. Hear St. Paul's words, which are a comment on Christ's: "Therefore I *take pleasure* in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake;" he adds the reason; "*for when I am weak, then* am I strong[1]." As health and exercise and regular diet are necessary to strength of the body, so an enfeebling and afflicting of the natural man, a chastising and afflicting of soul and body, are necessary to the exaltation of the soul.

Again, St. Paul says, "Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head[2]." As if he said, *This* is a *Christian's* revenge; *this* is how a *Christian* heaps punishment and suffering on the head of his enemy; viz. by returning good for evil. Is there pleasure in seeing an injurer and oppressor at your feet? has a man wronged you, slandered you, tyrannized over you, abused your confidence, been ungrateful to you? or to take what is more common, has a man been insolent to you, shown contempt of you, thwarted you, outwitted you, been cruel to you, and you feel resentment,—and your feeling is this, "I wish him no ill, but I should like him just to be brought down for this, and to make amends to me;" rather say,

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 10.

[2] Rom. xii. 19, 20.

hard though it be, "I will overcome him with love; except severity be a duty, I will say nothing, do nothing; I will keep quiet, I will seek to do him a service; I owe him a service, not a grudge; and I will be kind, and sweet, and gentle, and composed; and while I cannot disguise from him that I know well where he stands, and where I, still this shall be with all peaceableness and purity of affection." O hard duty, but most blessed! for even to take into account the *pleasure* of revenge, such as it is, is there not greater gratification in thus melting the proud and injurious heart, than in triumphing over it outwardly, without subduing it within? Is there not more of true enjoyment, in looking up to God, and calling Him (so to speak), as a witness of what is done, and having His Angels as conscious spectators of your triumph, though not a soul on earth knows any thing of it, than to have your mere carnal retaliation of evil for evil known and talked of, in the presence of all, and more than all, who saw the insult or heard of the wrong?

The case is the same as regards poverty, which it is the fashion of the world to regard not only as the greatest of evils, but as the greatest *disgrace*. Men count it a disgrace, because it certainly does often arise from carelessness, sloth, imprudence, and other faults. But, in many cases, it is nothing else but the very state of life in which God has placed a man; but still, even then, it is equally despised by the world. Now if there is one thing clearly set forth in the Bible it is this, that "Blessed are the poor." Our Saviour was the great example of poverty; He was a poor man. St. Paul

says, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich[1]." Or consider St. Paul's very solemn language about the danger of wealth: "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows[2]." Can we doubt that poverty is under the Gospel *better* than riches? I say *under* the Gospel, and *in* the regenerate, and *in* the true servants of God. Of course out of the Gospel, among the unregenerate, among the lovers of this world, it matters not whether one is rich or poor; a man is any how unjustified, and there is no better or worse in his outward circumstances. But, I say, *in Christ* the poor is in a more blessed lot than the wealthy. Ever since the Eternal Son of God was born in a stable, and had not a place to lay His head, and died an outcast and as a malefactor, heaven has been won by poverty, by disgrace, and by suffering. Not by these things in themselves, but by faith working in and through them.

These are a few out of many things which might be said on this most deep and serious subject. It is strange to say, but it is a truth which our own observation and experience will confirm, that when a man discerns in himself most sin and humbles himself most, when his comeliness seems to him to vanish away and all his graces to wither, when he feels disgust at himself, and revolts at the thought of himself,—seems to himself all

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 9. [2] 1 Tim. vi. 10.

dust and ashes, all foulness and odiousness, then it is that he is really rising in the kingdom of God: as it is said of Daniel, "From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words[1]."

Let us then, my brethren, understand our place, as the redeemed children of God. Some *must* be great in this world, but woe to those who make themselves great; woe to any who take one step out of their way with this object before them. Of course no one is safe from the intrusion of corrupt motives; but I speak of persons *allowing* themselves in such a motive, and acting mainly from such a motive. Let this be the settled view of all who would promote Christ's cause upon earth. If we are true to ourselves, nothing can really thwart us. Our warfare is not with carnal weapons, but with heavenly. The world does not understand what our real power is, and where it lies. And until we put ourselves into its hands of our own act, it can do nothing against us. Till we leave off patience, meekness, purity, resignation, and peace, it can do nothing against that Truth which is our birthright, that Cause which is ours, as it has been the cause of all saints before us. But let all who would labour for God in a dark time beware of any thing which ruffles, excites, and in any way withdraws them from the love of God and Christ, and simple obedience to Him.

This be our duty in the dark night, while we wait for the day; while we wait for Him who is our Day,

[1] Dan. x. 12.

while we wait for His coming, who is gone, who will return, and before whom all the tribes of the earth will mourn, but the sons of God will rejoice. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure[1]." It is our blessedness to be made like the all-holy, all-gracious, long-suffering, and merciful God; who made and who redeemed us; in whose presence is perfect rest, and perfect peace; whom the Seraphim are harmoniously praising, and the Cherubim tranquilly contemplating, and Angels silently serving, and the Church thankfully worshipping. All is order, repose, love, and holiness in heaven. There is no anxiety, no ambition, no resentment, no discontent, no bitterness, no remorse, no tumult. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because He trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength[2]."

[1] 1 John iii. 2, 3.

[2] Isa. xxvi. 3, 4.

# SERMON XXIII.

## FAITH WITHOUT DEMONSTRATION.

(TRINITY SUNDAY.)

JOHN iv. 48.

*"Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe."*

WE are now celebrating the last great Festival in the course of Holy services which began in Advent; the Feast of the Ever-blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whose mercy has planned, accomplished, and wrought in us "life and immortality." And the present Festival has this peculiarity in it,—that it is the commemoration of a mystery. Other Festivals celebrate mysteries also, but not because they are mysteries. The Annunciation, the birth of Christ, His death on the Cross, His Resurrection, the descent of the Holy Ghost, are all mysteries; but we celebrate them, not on this account, but for the blessings which we gain from them. But to-day we celebrate, not an act of God's mercy towards us, but, forgetting ourselves, and looking only upon Him, we reverently and awfully, yet joyfully, extol the wonders, not of His works, but of His own

Nature. We lift up heart and eyes towards Him, and speak of what He is in Himself. We dare to speak of His everlasting and infinite Essence; we directly contemplate a mystery, the deep unfathomable mystery of the Trinity in Unity.

Doubtless, from that deep mystery proceeds all that is to benefit and bless us. Without an Almighty Son we are not redeemed,—without an Ever-present Spirit we are not justified and sanctified. Yet, on this day, we celebrate the mystery for its own sake, not for our sake.

On this day, then, we should forget ourselves, and fix our thoughts upon God. Yet men are not willing to forget themselves; they do not like to become, as it were, nothing, and to have no work but faith. They like argument and proof better; they like to be convinced of a truth to their own satisfaction before they receive it, when, perhaps, such satisfaction is impossible. This happens in the sacred subject before us. The solemn mystery of the Trinity in Unity is contained in Scripture. We all know this; there is no doubt about it. Yet, though it be in Scripture, it does not follow that every one of us should be a fit judge whether and where it *is* in Scripture. It may be contained there fully, and yet we may be unable to see it fully, for various reasons. Now this is the great mistake which some persons fall into; they think, because the doctrine is maintained as being in Scripture by those who maintain it as true, that therefore they have a right to say that *they* will not believe it till it is proved to *them* from Scripture. It is nothing to them that the great multitude of good and holy men in all ages have held it.

They act like Thomas, who would not believe his brother Apostles that our Lord was risen, till he had as much proof as they, and who said, "Except I see and touch for myself, I will not believe." And they are like the Jews whom our Lord reproves in the text, saying, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." They call it an enlightened, rational belief, to demand for themselves proof from Scripture before they believe; and they think that any other admission of the doctrine is blind and superstitious, and unacceptable to Almighty God.

And when, perhaps, we have gone so far as to indulge them, and to profess that we *are* willing to prove the doctrine from Scripture to their satisfaction, and that, as a previous step to their believing and worshipping, then they meet us with such shallow and light-minded questions as the following:—"Where in Scripture do you find the word Trinity?" "Why do you insist upon it, if it is not in Scripture?" Again, "Where is the Holy Ghost expressly and plainly called God, in Scripture?" Again, "Where does Scripture speak of One Substance, Three Persons, as the Athanasian Creed speaks? Where does Scripture say that the Son and the Holy Ghost are uncreate? where, that 'the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal?'" And so they go through the whole of our Divine faith, carping, objecting, and traducing, even though they do not mean it; and all for this—because they *will* be judges themselves what is in Scripture and what is not; what necessary to salvation, and what not; what words are

important, and what not; what sources of instruction God has given besides Scripture, and what not.

Now, on such conduct, I observe as follows:—that they who think it unreasonable to believe without proof, are surely unreasonable themselves in so thinking. What warrant in reason, what right have they, to say that they will not believe the Creed unless it is proved to *them* to be in Scripture? They profess to act by reason. Well, then, I ask them, Is it according to reason to say, that they will not believe the Creed without reasons drawn out to their satisfaction from Scripture? I think not; I think I can prove that it is not. I think a very few words will make it evident, that they are unreasonable and inconsistent in refusing to believe before they see the Scripture proof.

1. I would ask, in the first place, whether we reason and prove before we act, in the affairs of this life? For instance, we are bound to obey the laws; we know that we shall get into great trouble if we do not; that if we break them, loss of property or imprisonment will be the consequence; so that it is of great importance that we should obey them; and we know that these laws are not always obvious to common sense; so that at times, a person may break them with the best intentions possible, if he act upon his own private notions of right and wrong. Accordingly, every now and then you find persons, under particular circumstances, alarmed lest they should be unawares breaking the law; and what do they then do? they consult some one skilled in the law, who has made the law his study and profession. It never occurs to a man so circumstanced to buy law books,

and to make out the truth of any important matter for himself, though it is really contained in law books. No; neither in ordinary nor in extraordinary matters does he trust his own judgment how the law stands. In ordinary matters he thinks it safe to go by the opinion of men in general; in extraordinary, he consults men learned in the law;—feeling too vividly how much is at stake to trust *himself*. It is not that he doubts, for an instant, that the laws of the land *are* put into writing, and are to be found in law books, and might be drawn out of them; but he distrusts *himself*. He distrusts, not the law books, but his own ability. There is too great a risk,—too much at stake,—his property, his character, his person, are at stake. He cannot afford, in such a case, to indulge his love of argument, disputation, and criticism. No; this love of argument can only be indulged in a case in which we have no fears. It is reserved for religious subjects. Such subjects differ from all other practical subjects, as being those on which the world feels free to speculate, because it does not *fear*. It has no fears about religious doctrine, no keen sensibilities; it does not feel, though it may confess, that its eternal interests are at stake. It suspends its judgment; for what matters it to the world whether it makes up its mind on a point of religion, or no? It can *afford* to say, "I will not believe till I see proof in Scripture for believing," though it does not say, "I will not believe lawyers till I understand the law," because it sees clearly and feels deeply that the law of the land is a real power, and that to come into collision with it is a real disaster; but it does not see and feel that "the

Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Men well understand that they will be sure to suffer from human law, for all they cannot judge of it by themselves, on the ground that they can, if they choose, get other competent men to judge for them; but they cannot be made to feel that they will hereafter have to answer for having been told the truth, however, or from whatever quarter they were told it,—at Church, or from teachers, or from religious books. They act as if it were no matter what they knew, unless they came to know it in one particular way, through Scripture.

Now, surely, this parallel holds most exactly, unless one or other of two things could be shown,—unless we have reason for thinking, first, that it matters not *what* we believe; or, secondly, that no faith is acceptable in the case of individuals which does not arise from their own *personal inferences* from Scripture. Let, then, grounds be produced for either of these two positions,—that correct faith is unimportant, or that personal faith must be built upon argument and proof. Till then, surely the general opinion of all men around us, and that from the first,—the belief of our teachers, friends, and superiors, and of all Christians in all times and places,—that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity must be held in order to salvation, is as good a reason for our believing it ourselves, even without being able to prove it in all its parts from Scripture; I say, this general reception of it by others, is as good a reason for accepting it

without hesitation, considering the fearful conseq uences which may follow from not accepting it, as the general belief how the law stands and the opinion of skilful lawyers about the law is a reason for following their view of the law, though we cannot verify that view from law books.

2. But it may here be said, that the cases are different in this respect,—that the commonly-received notions about what the land of the land is, do not impose upon our belief any thing improbable or difficult to accept, but that the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity is mysterious and unlikely; and, therefore, though it is reasonable to go by what others say in legal matters, it is not reasonable to go by others in respect to this doctrine.

Now, on the contrary, I consider that this mysteriousness is, as far as it proves any thing, a recommendation of the doctrine. I do not say that it *is* true, *because* it is mysterious; but that if it *be* true, it cannot help being mysterious. It would be strange, indeed, as has often been urged in argument, if any doctrine concerning God's infinite and eternal Nature were not mysterious. It would even be an objection to any professed doctrine concerning His Nature, if it were not mysterious. That the sacred doctrine, then, of the Trinity in Unity is mysterious, is no objection to it, but rather the contrary; the only objection that can plausibly be urged is, why, if so, should it be revealed? Why should we be told *any thing* about God's Adorable Nature, if incomprehensible He is, and mysterious the doctrine about Him must be? This, it is true, we *may* ask; though can we ask it piously and reverently? how

can *we* be judges what He will do on such a point? how can *we*, worms of the earth, and creatures of a day, pretend to determine what is most suitable to Him to tell, what is best for us to know, when He condescends to reveal Himself to us? Is it not enough for us that He speaks to us at all? and cannot we consent to leave Him (if I may so express myself) to speak to us in His own way? Whether, then, He will reveal to us any thing about His own Nature or no, our reason cannot determine; but this it can determine, that *if* He does, it will be mysterious. It is no *objection*, then, I repeat, to the doctrine, that it is mysterious; and it is no reason, therefore, against receiving it on the general belief of others, that it is mysterious. It is not more improbable that that doctrine should be what it is, than that the law of the land should be what it is; and as we believe the testimony of others about the law, without having studied the law, so we may well receive the doctrine of the Trinity on the testimony of our friends and superiors, our Church, all good men, learned men, and men in general, though *we* have not learning, attainments, or leisure sufficient to draw it for ourselves from Scripture. It is not stranger that the testimony of others should be our guide as to the next world, than that it is our guide in this.

This is the first answer that I should make to this objection; but now I will give another, which will open the state of the case more fully.

I suppose, then, there is no one who has not heard of, and no one but would be shocked at seeing, what is called an Atheist, that is, a person who denies that there

is any God at all. We should be shocked, not from any unchristian feeling towards the unhappy man who blasphemed his Maker and Saviour, but, without thinking of *him*, we should feel that Satan alone could be the author of such an impiety, and we should be sure that we had close beside us a very special manifestation of Satan. We should be shocked to think how very low human nature could fall, when it so yielded to the temptations of Satan. Such would be our feelings, and surely very right ones; yet, perhaps, the unhappy man in question, quite unconscious himself of his great misery, as unconscious as persons who deny the doctrine of the Trinity are of theirs (for this is the property of Satan's delusions, that the men seized by them do not suspect that they are delusions), I say, this man, altogether unconscious what a mournful object he was to all believers, might begin to argue and dispute in his defence, and his argument might be such as the following:

"You tell me that I must believe in a God, but I want this doctrine *proved* to my satisfaction before I believe it. It is very unreasonable in you to deal with me in any other way. Nay, you have gone against reason in your own case, in that you believe. For which of you has ever set about proving that God exists? which of you has not believed it before proving it? You believe it because you have been taught it. But prove to me the truth of this doctrine from the world which we see and touch, from the course of nature and of human affairs, and then I will believe it."

Now is it not a very happy thing that men are not accustomed to speak in this way? Why, if so,

all our life would be spent in proving things; our whole being would be one continued disputation; we should have no time for action; we should never get so far as action. Some things, nay, the greatest things, must be taken for granted, unless we make up our minds to fritter away life, doing nothing. But to return to the particular case before us;—should we think ourselves weak and dull in not seeking proof that God exists before believing in God, or the man in question miserable in needing it? Yet, if he persisted, and was of an acute and subtle mind, is it not plain, that abundant as is the evidence of God's existence, providence, power, wisdom, and love, on the face of nature and in human affairs, yet it would not at all be easy to prove it to *him*, not merely to *his* satisfaction, but to *our* satisfaction either. Clearly as we should feel the evidence, we should not be able to bring out the proof so as to come up to our own notions what a proof *ought* to be, and we should be disappointed with our own attempt.

For, let us see how this man would argue,—(after all, I scarcely like to say what he would urge, lest I should speak in a way unsuitable to this sacred place; and yet it may be useful to hint at one or two things, by way of showing *how much* we should be bound in consistency to admit, if we grant a man need believe nothing for which he cannot be given a clear and convenient proof,)—he will say then thus:

"You tell me that there is but one God; and you tell me to look abroad into the world, and I shall see proofs of it. I do look abroad, and I see good *and* evil.

I see the proof, then, of two gods, a good God, and another, evil. I see two principles struggling with each other." This shocking doctrine has before now been held by those who were determined to prove to themselves every thing before they believed; and when it is a question of argument and disputation, blasphemous as it is, much that is plausible can be said for it. For evil certainly has a kingdom of its own in the world; it seems to have a place here, and to act on system. Even Scripture calls Satan the god of this world; not meaning that he is really god of it (God forbid!), but that he has usurped the power of it, and seems to be god of it. If, then, every one is bound to prove his faith for himself before believing, then he is bound, not only to prove for himself the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity from Scripture, but he must first prove from the face of the world the doctrine of the Unity; and, as in the first case, he will, unless properly qualified, be in great risk of perplexing himself and denying that God is Three, so will he, in the latter, run great risk of denying that God is One. And it is to be feared that it is only because men have the doctrine of the Holy Trinity to speak against, that they do not speak against the doctrine of the Unity; they *will* doubt and cavil about something or other; and were revealed religion not before them, then they would speak against natural religion, as in other times and places they have already done.

Again; the deluded man I am supposing will continue his bad arguments as follows: "You tell me that God is almighty; now you may prove Him to be mighty, but how do you prove Him to be almighty? You can-

not prove more than you see, and you must be *all-seeing* to judge of what is *almighty*." Again, "You say that God is infinite; but all you can know on the subject is, that the Intelligence that created the world surpasses your comprehension; but by how much, whether infinitely, you cannot know, you cannot prove." Again, "You tell me to believe that God had no beginning; this is incomprehensible; I do not know what you mean; I cannot take in the sense of your words. It is as easy to believe the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, as that God had no beginning. And there is less proof for it than for the doctrine of the Trinity; for, at least, there *is* proof in Scripture for that doctrine, but what possible proof can you pretend to bring from the face of the world that God was from everlasting?"

Now I do not see how such an objector can be answered satisfactorily, if he is pertinacious. You meet, indeed, with books written to prove to us (as they profess) the being of an Almighty, Infinite, Everlasting God, from what is seen in the natural world, but they do *not* strictly prove it; they do but recommend, evidence, and confirm the doctrine to those who believe it already. They do not make an approach to a complete argumentative proof of it. They are obliged to pass over, or take for granted, many of the most important points in the doctrine. They are, doubtless, useful to Christians, as far as they tend to enliven their devotion, to strengthen their faith, to excite their gratitude, and to enlarge their minds; but they are little or no evidence to unbelievers. And, in saying all this, I must not be understood to say, that the course of the

world does not justly impress upon us the doctrine of One True, Infinite, and Almighty God;—it does so,—but that the proof is too deep, subtle, complex, indirect, delicate, and spiritual to be analyzed and brought out into formal argument, level to the comprehension of the multitude of men. And I say the same of the proof of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in Scripture. A humble, teachable, simple, believing mind, will imbibe the doctrine from Scripture, how it knows not, as we drink in the air without seeing it; but when a man wants formal grounds for his belief laid before him in a definite shape, and has little time for reflection and study, and little learning or cultivation of mind, then, I say, he can do little better than to fall back upon his impressions instead of proof, on the belief of all around him, and on the testimony of all ages.

Let us, then, learn from this Festival to walk *by faith;* that is, not to ask jealously and coldly for strict arguments, but to follow generously what has fair evidence for it, even though it might have fuller or more systematic evidence. It is in this way that we all believe that there is a God. A subtle infidel might soon perplex any one of us. Of course he might. Our very state and warfare is one of faith. Let us aim at, let us reach after and (as it were) catch at the things of the next world. There is a voice within us, which assures us that there is something higher than earth. We cannot analyze, define, contemplate what it is that thus whispers to us. It has no shape or material form. There is that in our hearts which prompts us to religion, and which condemns and chastises sin. And

this yearning of our nature is met and sustained, it finds an object to rest upon, when it hears of the existence of an All-powerful, All-gracious Creator. It incites us to a noble faith in what we cannot see.

Let us exercise a similar faith, as regards the Mysteries of Revelation also. Here is the true use of Scripture in leading us to the truth. If we read it humbly and inquire teachably, we shall find; we shall have a deep impression on our minds that the doctrines of the Creed are there, though we may not be able to put our hands upon particular texts, and say how much of it is contained here and how much there. But, on the other hand, if we read in order to *prove* those doctrines, in a critical, argumentative way, then all traces of them will disappear from Scripture as if they were not there. They will fade away insensibly like hues at sunset, and we shall be left in darkness. We shall come to the conclusion that they are not in Scripture, and shall, perhaps, boldly call them unscriptural. Religious convictions cannot be forced; nor is Divine truth ours to summon at will. If we *determine* that we will find it out, we shall find nothing. Faith and humility are the only spells which conjure up the image of heavenly things into the letter of inspiration; and faith and humility consist, not in going about to prove, but in the outset confiding on the testimony of others. Thus afterwards on looking back, we shall find we have proved what we did not set out to prove. We cannot control our reasoning powers, nor exert them at our will or at any moment. It is so with other faculties of the mind also. Who can command his

memory? The more you try to recall what you have forgotten, the less is your chance of success. Leave thinking about it, and perhaps memory returns. And in like manner, the more you set yourself to argue and prove, in order to discover truth, the less likely you are to reason correctly and to infer profitably. You will be caught by sophisms, and think them splendid discoveries. Be sure, the highest reason is not to reason on system, or by rules of argument, but in a natural way; not with formal intent to draw out proofs, but trusting to God's blessing that you may gain a right impression from what you read. If your reasoning powers are weak, using argumentative forms will not make them stronger. They will enable you to dispute acutely and to hit objections, but not to discover truth. There is nothing creative, nothing progressive in exhibitions of argument. The utmost they do is to enable us to state well what we have already discovered by the tranquil exercise of our reason. Faith and obedience are the main things; believe and do, and pray to God for light, and you will reason well without knowing it.

Let us not then seek for signs and wonders; for clear, or strong, or compact, or original arguments; but let us *believe;* evidence will come after faith as its reward, better than before it as its groundwork. Faith soars aloft; it listens for the notes of heaven, the faint voices or echoes which scarcely reach the earth, and it thinks them worth all the louder sounds of cities or of schools of men. It is foolishness in the eyes of the world; but it is a foolishness of God wiser than the

world's wisdom. Let us embrace the sacred Mystery of the Trinity in Unity, which, as the Creed tells us, is the ground of the Catholic religion. Let us think it enough, let us think it far too great a privilege, for sinners such as we are, for a fallen people in a degenerate age, to inherit the faith once delivered to the Saints; let us accept it thankfully; let us guard it watchfully; let us transmit it faithfully to those who come after us.

# SERMON XXIV.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

(TRINITY SUNDAY.)

MATT. xxviii. 19.

*"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."*

THAT in some real sense the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are They whom we are bound to serve and worship, from whom comes the Gospel of grace, and in whom the profession of Christianity centres, surely is shown, most satisfactorily and indisputably, by the words of this text. When Christ was departing, He gave commission to His Apostles, and taught them what to teach and preach; and first of all they were to introduce their converts into His profession, or into His Church, and that by a solemn rite, which, as He had told Nicodemus at an earlier time, was to convey a high spiritual grace. This solemn and supernatural ordinance of discipleship was to be administered in the Name—of whom? in the Name (can we doubt it?) of Him whose disciples the converts forthwith became; of that God whom, from that day forward, they confessed and

adored; whom they promised to obey; in whose word they trusted; by whose bounty they were to be rewarded. Yet when Christ would name the Name of God, He does but say, "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." I consider, then, that on the very face of His sacred words there is a difficulty, *till* the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is made known to us. What can be meant by saying, in the Name, not of God, but of Three? It is an unexpected manner of speech.

Now even if it were merely said, "of the Father and the Son," there would surely be a difficulty in the terms of His command. We might indeed suppose that He meant thereby to denote the Supreme Lord of all, and the instrument and mediator of His mercies in the Dispensation then commencing (as we read of the Israelites "believing God and His servant Moses," and "worshipping the Lord and the king," David); but surely even then it would be strange and inexplicable that Christ should say, "the Father and Son," and not "God and the Son," or "God and Christ," or the like; whereas the Name of God does not occur at all, and the two words used instead are what are called *correlatives*, one implies the other, they look from the one to the other. There is no mention of a Fount of mercies and a channel, and that, towards man the recipient; but it is like the statement of some sacred doctrine which has its meaning in itself, independently of man or of any economy of mercy towards him. And the force of this remark is increased by our Lord's making mention, in addition, of the Holy Ghost, which much confirms this impression

that the Three Sacred Names introduced have a meaning relatively to each other, and not to any temporal dispensation. Did the text run, "in the Name of God, Jesus Christ, and the Comforter," I do not say that this would have overcome the difficulty, or that it would be satisfactory to interpret it of an Author of grace and His instruments; but at all events there is far more difficulty, or rather an insuperable difficulty in such an interpretation of the text, taken as Christ actually spoke it. And then, considering that if there was one boon above another which a convert might naturally claim of an Apostle, it was to know *whom* he was to worship, *whose* servant he was to become, *who* was to be his God, now that he had abandoned idols—(as, for instance, Moses said, "When I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, *What is His Name?* what shall I say unto them?" and Almighty God acknowledged that the request was right by granting it; and as Jacob said, "Tell me, I pray thee, Thy *Name?*" and as Manoah said, "What is Thy *Name?*" and as, in accordance with these instances, St. Paul said to the Athenians, "Whom ye *ignorantly worship*, Him *declare* I unto you");—I say, with these considerations before us, we might have expected that there would have been in the Baptismal form a clear and simple announcement of the Christian's God, such as this, "In the Name of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," that is, *unless* the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Trinity be true. If indeed so it be, as the Church has ever taught, that the Father, Son, and Holy

Ghost are the One God into whose service Christians are enrolled, then good reason that They should be named upon the convert on his initiation. In that case there is no difficulty; the sacred form of words precisely answers to the worshipper's question, "What is Thy Name?" to the Apostle's promise, "Him declare I unto you:" but on the supposition, which impugners of the doctrine maintain, that by "Son" is meant a man, and that the Holy Spirit is not God and not an intelligent person at all, certainly a great and unexpected, and (I may say, humanly speaking) unnecessary obscurity hangs over the first act of the Gospel teaching.

Nor let it be objected to Catholic believers, that there can be no greater obscurity than a mystery; and that the Sacred Truth which they confess is a greater perplexity to the convert than any which can arise from considerations such as I have been insisting on. For the point I have been urging, is the improbability that our Lord should introduce an obscurity of *mere words*, with none existing in fact, which is the case in the heretical interpretation; and that He should prefer to speak so darkly when He might have spoken simply and intelligibly; whereas, if there be an eternal mystery in the Godhead, such as we aver, then, from the nature of the case, there could not but be a difficulty in the words in which He revealed it. Christ, in that case, makes no mystery for the occasion; He uses the plainest and most exact form of speech which human language admits of. And this deserves notice; for it may be extended to the details of this great Catholic doctrine, of which I propose presently to give some brief account. I

mean that, much as is idly and profanely said against the Creed of St. Athanasius as being unintelligible, yet the real objection which misbelievers feel, if they spoke correctly, is, that it is too plain. No sentences can be more simple, nor statements more precise, than those of which it consists. The difficulty is not in any one singly; but in their combination. And herein lies a remarkable difference between the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and some modern dogmatic statements on other points, some true and some not true, which have been at times put forward as necessary to salvation. Much controversy, for instance, has taken place in late centuries about the doctrine of justification, and about faith; but here endless perplexities and hopeless disputes arise, as we all know, as to what is meant by "faith," and what by "justification;" whereas most of the *words* used in the Creed to which I have referred are only common words used in their common sense, as "Lord" and "God," "eternal" and "almighty," "one" and "three;" nor again are the statements difficult. There is no difficulty, except such as is in the nature of things, in the Adorable Mystery spoken of, which no wording can remove or explain.

And now I propose to state the doctrine, as far as it can be done, in few words, in the mode in which it is disclosed to us in the text of Scripture; in doing which, if I shall be led on to mention one or two points of detail, it must not be supposed, as some persons strangely mistake, as if such additional statements were intended for *explanation*; whereas they leave the great Mystery just as it was before, and are only useful as

impressing on our mind *what* it is that the Catholic Church means to assert, and as making it a matter of real faith and apprehension, and not a mere assemblage of words.

And first, I need scarcely say, considering how often it is told us in Scripture, that God is One. "Hear, O Israel," says Moses, "the Lord our God is one Lord." "To us there is but one God, the Father," says St. Paul. Again, "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all." Again, "One God, and one Mediator between God and men[1]." Now, it may be asked, in what sense "one"? for we speak of things being one which really are many; as Scripture speaks of all Christians being made *one* body; of God being made at *one* with sinners; of God and man being *one* Christ; and of *one* Baptism, though administered to multitudes. I answer, that God is one in the simplest and strictest sense, as all Scripture shows; this is true, whatever else is true: not in any nominal or secondary sense; but one, as being individual; as truly one as any individual soul or spirit is one; nay, infinitely more truly so, because all creatures are imperfect, and He has all perfection. In Him there are no parts or passions, nothing inchoate or incomplete, nothing by communication, nothing of quality, nothing which admits of increase, nothing common to others. He is separate from all things, and whole, and perfect, and simple, and like Himself and none else; and one, not in name, or by figure, or by accommodation, or by abstraction, but one in Himself, or, as the Creed speaks, one in substance

[1] Deut. vi. 4. 1 Cor. viii. 6. Eph. iv. 5, 6. 1 Tim. ii. 5.

or essence. All that He is, is Himself, and nothing short of Himself; His attributes are He. Has He wisdom? this does but mean that He is wisdom. Has He love? that is, "God is love," as St. John speaks. Has He omnipresence? that is, He is omnipresent. Has He omniscience? He is all-knowing. Has He power? He is almighty. He is holy, and just, and true, and good, not in the way of qualities of His essence, but holiness, justice, truth, and goodness, are all one and the self-same He, according as He is contemplated by His creatures in various aspects and relations. We men are incapable of conceiving of Him as He is; we cannot attain to more than glimpses, accidental or partial views, of His Infinite Majesty, and these we call by different names, as if He had attributes, and were of a compound nature; and thus He deigns in mercy to us to speak of Himself, using even human, sensible, and material terms; as if He could be angry, who is not touched by evil; or could repent, in whom is no variableness; or had eyes, or arms, or breath, who is a Spirit; whereas He is at once and absolutely all perfection, and whatever is He, is all He is, and He is Himself always and altogether.

Thus we must ever commence in all our teaching concerning the Holy Trinity; we must not begin by saying that there are Three, and then afterwards go on to say that there is One, lest we give false notions of the nature of that One; but we must begin by laying down the great Truth that there is One God in a simple and strict sense, and then go on to speak of Three, which is the way in which the mystery was progressively revealed in Scripture. In the Old Testament we read of the Unity;

in the New, we are enlightened in the knowledge of the Trinity.

And here, let it be observed, that we have a sort of figure or intimation of the sacred Mystery of the Trinity in Unity even in what has been now said concerning the Divine Attributes. For as the Attributes of God are many in one mode of speaking, yet all One in God; so, too, there are Three Divine Persons, yet these Three are One. Let it not be for an instant supposed that I am *paralleling* the two cases, which is the Sabellian heresy; but I use the one in *illustration* of the other; and, in way of illustration, I observe as follows: When we speak of God as Wisdom, or as Love, we mean to say that He is Wisdom, and that He is Love; that He is each separately and wholly, yet not that Wisdom is the same as Love, though He is both at once. Wisdom and Love stand for ideas quite distinct from each other, and not to be confused, though they are united in Him. In all He is and all He does, He is Wisdom and He is Love; yet it is both true that He is but One, and without qualities, and withal true again that Love is not Wisdom. Again, as God is Wisdom or Love, so is Wisdom or Love in and with God, and whatever God is. Is God eternal? so is His wisdom. Is He unchangeable? so is His wisdom. Is He uncreate, infinite, almighty, all-holy? His wisdom has these characteristics also. Since God has no parts or passions, whatever is really of or from God, is all that He is. If there is confusion of language here, and an apparent play upon words, this arises from our incapacity in comprehension and expression. We see that all these separate statements must be

true, and if they result in an apparent contrariety with each other, this we cannot avoid; nor need we be perplexed about them, nor shrink from declaring any one of them. That simple accuracy of statement which would harmonize all of them is beyond us, because the power of contemplating the Eternal, as He is, is beyond us. We must be content with what we can see, and use it for our practical guidance, without caring for the apparent contradiction of terms involved in our profession of it.

A second illustration may be taken from the material images which Scripture condescends to employ. We read of the eye of God, and the arm of God. Now we know that man has an eye and an arm as really parts of him, and not as figures; but let us suppose for a moment that his body were made spiritual, what would be the consequence? What really would follow we cannot say, for it is beyond us; but, since a spirit has no parts, we may *conceive* that all those separate organs of man's body which at present exist, instead of having a local disposition in it any longer, and of springing out of it by extension, would be all one, though all distinct still. A spiritual body might possibly be all eye, all ear, all arm, all heart; yet not as if all these were confused together, and names only; not as if henceforth there were no seeing, no hearing, no working, and no feeling, but because a spirit has no parts in extension, and is what it is all at once. And I notice this, because it shows us that things may really exist in a subject which we are contemplating, though they look like ideas only or notions created by our own minds. As a body need not be supposed to lose eye

and hand by becoming spiritual, but its organs might exist in it as truly as before, because it was a body, but in a new manner, because it was spiritual, so as to seem like mere abstractions or unreal qualities; so may we suppose that though God is a Spirit and One, yet He may be also a Trinity: not as if that Trinity were a name only, or stood for three manifestations, or qualities, or attributes, or relations,—such mere ideas or conceptions as we may come to form when contemplating God;—but that, as in that body which had become spiritual, eye and hand would not be abstractions after the change, since they were not so before it, nor would eye necessarily be the same as the hand, though the body was all eye and all hand; so (if we may dare to use human illustrations on this most sacred subject), the Eternal Three (I do not say *in the same way*, for I am not attempting to explain *how* the mystery is, but to bring out distinctly *what* we mean by it), in like manner I say, the Eternal Three are worshipped by the Catholic Church as distinct, yet One;—the Most High God being wholly the Father, and wholly the Son, and wholly the Holy Ghost; yet the Three Persons being distinct from each other, not merely in name, or by human abstraction, but in very truth, as truly as a fountain is distinct from the stream which flows from it, or the root of a tree from its branches.

Now should any one be tempted to say that this is dark language, and difficult speculation to set before a Christian people, I answer that it is not more dark and difficult than the sacred mystery which is our great subject to-day; that it is in fact but the *exposition* of

the sacred mystery as the Church has received it; that I am not engaged in defending the Creed of St. Athanasius, but am stating its meaning; and, My Brethren, that you may well bear once in the year to be reminded that Christianity gives exercise to the whole mind of man, to our highest and most subtle reason, as well as to our feelings, affections, imagination, and conscience. If we find it tries us, and is too severe, whether for our reason, or our imagination, or our feelings, let us bow down in silent adoration, and submit to it each of our faculties by turn, not complain of its sublimity or its range. And now to proceed :—

We hear much in the Old Testament of those attributes of God of which I have already spoken. His omnipotence: "I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect." Self-existence: "And God said unto Moses, I Am that I Am: thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you." Holiness: "Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders!" His mercy, and justice, and faithfulness: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Awful majesty: "That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful Name, the Lord thy God." Truth: "His truth endureth from generation to generation." Omnipresence: "If I climb up into heaven, Thou art there; if I go down to hell, Thou art there also." Omniscience: "The eyes of the Lord are in

every place, beholding the evil and the good." Knowledge of the heart: "Thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men." Mysteriousness: "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour." Eternity: "Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose Name is Holy[1]." These are some out of numberless announcements in the Old Testament of the Divine Attributes; and though every thing concerning the Supreme Being is mysterious, yet we do not commonly feel any mystery here, because we see a sort of parallel to these attributes in what we call the qualities, properties, powers, and habits of our own minds. We are endowed by nature and through grace with a portion of certain excellences which belong in perfection to the Most High,—as benevolence, wisdom, justice, truth, and holiness; and though we do not know how these attributes exist in God, nay how they exist in ourselves, yet since we are ourselves used to them, and cannot deny their existence, we are not startled when we are told they exist in God. But there are certain other disclosures made to us concerning the Divine Nature, even from the first page of Scripture, and growing in definiteness as Revelation proceeds, of which we have no image or parallel in ourselves, and which in consequence we feel to be strange and startling, and call unintelligible because we are not used to them, and mysterious because we cannot account for them. Thus in the history of the creation we read: "The Spirit of God moved upon

[1] Gen. xvii. 1. Exod. iii. 14; xv. 11; xxxiv. 6, 7. Deut. xxviii. 58. Ps. c. 4; cxxxix. 7. Prov. xv. 3. 2 Chron. vi. 30. Isa. xlv. 15; lvii. 15.

the face of the waters;" who shall say how this awful intimation is to be interpreted? who but will "desire to look into" such deep things, yet be silent from conscious weakness, till he hears the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, which explains to him the inspired text by revealing the mystery? Again we read, that, when Jacob had wrestled with the Angel, "he called the name of the place Peniel," for he had seen God's Face or Countenance, "and," he adds, "my life is preserved." And Almighty God promised Moses, "My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." And again Moses asks, "I beseech Thee, shew me Thy Glory. And He said, I will make all My Goodness pass before thee . . . thou canst not see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live." And we are told that "the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the Lord." And the Psalmist says, "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the Breath of His mouth." And Wisdom says in the Proverbs, "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way; before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. . . . I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." And in the prophet Isaiah we read, "Awake, awake, put on strength, O Arm of the Lord;" and again, "I have covered thee in the shadow of My Hand[1]." Now any one such expression once or twice used might not have

[1] Gen. i. 2; xxxii. 30. Exod. xxxiii. 14—20. 1 Sam. iii. 21. Ps. xxxiii. 6. Prov. viii. 22, 23. 30. Isa. li. 9. 16.

excited attention; but this mention of the Word, and Wisdom, and Presence, and Glory, and Spirit, and Breath, and Countenance, and Arm, and Hand of the Almighty is too frequent, and with too much of personal characteristic, to be dutifully passed over by the careful reader of Scripture; and in matter of fact it did, before Christ came, attract the attention of Jewish believers, as is proved to us most clearly by some remarkable passages in the books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, to which I need not do more than allude [1].

It would appear, then, from the revelations of the Old Testament, that while God is in His essence most simply and absolutely one, yet there is a real sense in which He is not one, though created natures do not, cannot, furnish such representations of Him as to enable us easily to acquiesce in the conclusions to which the Scripture announcements inevitably lead. We understand things unknown, by the pattern of things seen and experienced; we are able to contemplate Almighty God so far as earthly things are partial reflexions of Him; when they fail us, we are lost. And as of course nothing earthly or created is His exact and perfect image, we have at best but dim glimpses of His infinite glory; and if Scripture reveal to us aught concerning Him, we must be content to take it on faith, without comprehending how it is, or having any clear understanding of our own words. When it declares to us that God is wise and good, we form some idea of what is meant from the properties and habits which attach to the human soul; when we read of His arm or eye, we

[1] Wisdom vii. 14, et seq.; Ecclus. xxiv. 3, et seq.

have some faint, though unworthy shadow of the truth in the members and organs of the human body; but when we read of His Spirit, or Word, or Presence, as at once very distinct from Him, yet most intimately one with Him,—more intimately one than our properties are one with our souls, more real and distinct than the members and organs of our bodies,—we feel the weight of that Mystery, which exists also when mention is made of the Divine Wisdom, or the Divine Arm, though we feel it not.

And this Mystery, which the Old Testament obscurely signifies, is in the New clearly declared; and it is this,—that the God of all, who is revealed in the Old Testament, is the Father of a Son from everlasting, called also His Word and Image, of His substance and partaker of all His perfections, and equal to Himself, yet without being separate from Him, but one with Him; and that from the Father and the Son proceeds eternally the Holy Spirit, who also is of one substance, Divinity, and majesty with Father and Son. Moreover we learn that the Son or Word is a Person,—that is, is to be spoken of as "He," not "it," and can be addressed; and that the Holy Ghost also is a Person. Thus God subsists in Three Persons, from everlasting to everlasting; first, God is the Father, next God is the Son, next God is the Holy Ghost; and the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Holy Ghost, nor the Holy Ghost the Father. And God is Each of these Three, and nothing else; that is, He is either the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Ghost. Moreover, God is as wholly and entirely God in the Person of the

Father, as though there were no Son and Spirit; as entirely in that of the Son, as though there were no Spirit and Father; as entirely in that of the Spirit, as though there were no Father and Son. And the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, while there is but one God; and that without any inequality, because there is but One God, and He is without parts or degrees; though how it is that that same Adorable Essence, indivisible, and numerically One, should subsist perfectly and wholly in Each of Three Persons, no words of man can explain, nor earthly illustration typify.

Now the passages in the New Testament in which this Sacred Mystery is intimated to us, are such as these. First, we read, as I have said already, that God is One; next, that He has an Only-begotten Son; further, that this Only-begotten Son is "in the bosom of the Father;" and that "He and the Father are One." Further, that He is also the Word; that "the Word is God, and is with God;" moreover, that the Son is in Himself a distinct Person, in a real sense, for He has taken on Him our nature, and become man, though the Father has not. What is all this but the doctrine, that that God who is in the strictest sense One, is both entirely the Father, and is entirely the Son? or that the Father is God, and the Son God, yet but One God? Moreover the Son is the express "Image" of God, and He is "in the form of God," and "equal with God;" and "he that hath seen Him, hath seen the Father," and "He is in the Father and the Father in Him." Moreover the Son has all the attri-

butes of the Father: He is "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty;" "by Him were all things created, visible and invisible;" "by Him do all things consist;" none but He "knoweth the Father," and none but the Father "knoweth the Son." He "knoweth all things;" He "searcheth the hearts and the reins;" He is "the Truth and the Life;" and He is the Judge of all men.

And again, what is true of the Son is true of the Holy Ghost; for He is "the Spirit of God;" He "proceedeth from the Father;" He is in God as "the spirit of a man that is in him;" He "searcheth all things, even the deep things of God;" He is "the Spirit of Truth;" the "Holy Spirit;" at the creation, He "moved upon the face of the waters;" "Whither shall I go," says the Psalmist, "from Thy Spirit?" He is the Giver of all gifts, "dividing to every man severally as He will;" we are born again "of the Spirit." To resist Divine grace is to grieve, to tempt, to resist, to quench, to do despite to the Spirit. He is the Comforter, Ruler, and Guide of the Church; He reveals things to come; and blasphemy against Him has never forgiveness. In all such passages, it is surely implied both that the Holy Ghost has a Personality of His own, and that He is God.

And thus, on the whole, the words of the Creed hold good, that "there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; but the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one,—the glory equal, the majesty co-

eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. And in this Trinity, none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another; but the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal; so that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped."

Lastly, it is added, "He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity:" on which I make two remarks, and so conclude. First, what is very obvious, that such a declaration supposes that a person has the opportunity of believing. We are not speaking of heathens, but of Christians; of those who are taught the truth, who have the offer of it, and who reject it. Accordingly, we do not contemplate in this Creed cases of imperfect or erroneous teaching;—or of what may be called misinformation of the reason; or any case of invincible ignorance; but of a man's wilful rejection of what has been fairly set before him. Secondly, when the Creed says that we "must think *thus* of the Trinity," it would seem to imply, that it had been drawing out a certain clear, substantive, consistent, and distinctive view of the doctrine, which is the Catholic view; and that, in opposition to other views of it, whether Sabellian, or Arian, or Tritheistic, or others that might be mentioned; all of which, without denying in words the Holy Three, do deny Him in fact and in the event, and involve their wilful maintainers in the anathema which is here proclaimed, not in harshness, but as a faithful warning, and a solemn protest.

May we never speak on subjects like this without

awe; may we never dispute without charity; may we never inquire without a careful endeavour, with God's aid, to sanctify our knowledge, and to impress it on our hearts, as well as to store it in our understandings!

# SERMON XXV.

## PEACE IN BELIEVING.

(TRINITY SUNDAY.)

ISAIAH vi. 3.

*"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts."*

EVERY Lord's day is a day of rest, but this, perhaps, more than any. It commemorates, not an act of God, however gracious and glorious, but His own unspeakable perfections and adorable mysteriousness. It is a day especially sacred to peace. Our Lord left His peace with us when He went away; "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you[1];" and He said He would send them a Comforter, who should give them peace. Last week we commemorated that Comforter's coming; and to-day, we commemorate in an especial way the gift He brought with Him, in that great doctrine which is its emblem and its means. "These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation[2]." Christ here says, that instead of this world's

[1] John xiv. 27.

[2] John xvi. 33.

troubles, He gives His disciples peace; and, accordingly, in to-day's Collect, we pray that we may be kept in the faith of the Eternal Trinity in Unity, *and* be "defended from all adversities," for in keeping that faith we are kept from trouble.

Hence, too, in the blessing which Moses told the priests to pronounce over the children of Israel, God's Name is put upon them, and that three times, in order to bless and keep them, to make His face shine on them, and to give them peace. And hence again, in our own solemn form of blessing, with which we end our public service, we impart to the people "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," and "the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

God is the God of peace, and in giving us peace He does but give Himself, He does but manifest Himself to us; for His presence is peace. Hence our Lord, in the same discourse in which He promised His disciples peace, promised also, that "He would come and manifest Himself unto them," that "He and His Father would come to them, and make Their abode with them[1]." Peace is His everlasting state; in this world of space and time He has wrought and acted; but from everlasting it was not so. For six days He wrought, and then He rested according to that rest which was His eternal state; yet not so rested, as not in one sense to "work hitherto," in mercy and in judgment, towards that world which He had created. And more especially, when He sent His Only-begotten Son into the world, and that most Gracious and All-pitiful Son, our Lord,

[1] John xiv. 21. 23.

condescended to come to us, both He and His Father wrought with a mighty hand; and They vouchsafed the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and He also wrought wonderfully, and works hitherto. Certainly the whole economy of redemption is a series of great and continued works; but still they all tend to rest and peace, as at the first. They began out of rest, and they end in rest. They end in that eternal state out of which they began. The Son was from eternity in the bosom of the Father, as His dearly-beloved and Only-begotten. He loved Him before the foundation of the world. He had glory with Him before the world was. He was in the Father, and the Father in Him. None knew the Son but the Father, nor the Father but the Son. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He was "the Brightness of God's glory and the express Image of His Person;" and in this unspeakable Unity of Father and Son, was the Spirit also, as being the Spirit of the Father, and the Spirit of the Son; the Spirit of Both at once, not separate from them, yet distinct, so that they were Three Persons, One God, from everlasting.

Thus was it, we are told, from everlasting;—before the heavens and the earth were made, before man fell or Angels rebelled, before the sons of God were formed in the morning of creation, yea, before there were Seraphim to veil their faces before Him and cry "Holy," He existed without ministers, without attendants, without court and kingdom, without manifested glory, without any thing but Himself; He His own Temple, His own infinite rest, His own supreme bliss, from eternity. O

wonderful mystery! O the depth of His majesty! O deep things which the Spirit only knoweth! Wonderful and strange to creatures who grovel on this earth, as we, that He, the All-powerful, the All-wise, the All-good, the All-glorious, should for an eternity, for years without end, or rather, apart from time, which is but one of His creatures, that He should have dwelt without those through whom He might be powerful, in whom He might be wise, towards whom He might be good, by whom He might be glorified. O wonderful, that all His deep and infinite attributes should have been without manifestation! O wonderful thought! and withal, O thought comfortable to us worms of the earth, as often as we feel in ourselves and see in others gifts which have no exercise, and powers which are quiescent! He, the All-powerful God, rested from eternity, and did not work; and yet, why *not* rest, wonderful though it be, seeing He was so blessed in Himself? why should *He* seek external objects to know, to love, and to commune with, who was all-sufficient in Himself? How could He need fellows, as though He were a man, when He was not solitary, but had ever with Him His Only-begotten Word in whom He delighted, whom He loved ineffably, and the Eternal Spirit, the very bond of love and peace, dwelling in and dwelt in by Father and Son? Rather how was it that He ever began to create, who had a Son without beginning and without imperfection, whom He could love with a perfect love? What exceeding exuberance of goodness was it that *He* should deign at length to surround Himself with creation, who had need of nothing, and to change His everlasting silence for

the course of Providence and the conflict of good and evil! I say nothing of the apostasies against Him, the rebellions and blasphemies which men and devils have committed. I say nothing of that unutterable region of woe, the prison of the impenitent, which is to last for eternity, coeval with Himself henceforth, as if in rivalry of His blissful heaven. I say nothing of this, for God cannot be touched with evil; and all the sins of those reprobate souls cannot impair His everlasting felicity. But, I ask, how was it that He who needed nothing, who was all in all, who had infinite Equals in the Son and the Spirit, who were One with Him, how was it that He created His Saints, but from simple love of them from eternity? Why should He make man in the Image of God, whose Image already was the Son, All-perfect, All-exact, without variableness, without defect, by a natural propriety and unity of substance? And when man fell, why did He not abandon or annihilate the whole race, and create others? why did He go so far as to begin a fresh and more wonderful dispensation towards us, and, as He had wrought marvellously in Providence, work marvellously also in grace, even sending His Eternal Son to take on Him our fallen nature, and to purify and renew it by His union with it, but that, infinite as was His own blessedness, and the Son's perfection, and man's unprofitableness, yet, in His loving-kindness, He determined that unprofitable man should be a partaker of the Son's perfection and His own blessedness?

And thus it was that, as He had made man in the beginning, so also He redeemed him; and the history of this redemption we have been tracing for the last six

months in our sacred Services. We have gone through in our memory the whole course of that Dispensation of active providences, which God, in order to our redemption, has superinduced upon His eternal and infinite repose. First, we commemorated the approach of Christ, in the weeks of Advent; then His birth, of the Blessed Mary, after a miraculous conception, at Christmas; then His circumcision; His manifestation to the wise men; His baptism and beginning of miracles; His presentation in the Temple; His fasting and temptation in the wilderness, in Lent; His agony in the garden; His betrayal; His mocking and scourging; His cross and passion; His burial; His resurrection; His forty days, converse with His disciples after it; then His Ascension; and, lastly, the coming of the Holy Ghost in His stead to remain with the Church unto the end,—unto the end of the world; for so long is the Almighty Comforter to remain with us. And thus, in commemorating the Spirit's gracious office during the past week, we were brought, in our series of representations, to the end of all things; and now what is left but to commemorate what will follow after the end?—the return of the everlasting reign of God, the infinite peace and blissful perfection of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, differing indeed from what it once was by the fruits of creation and redemption, but not differing in the supreme blessedness, the ineffable mutual love, the abyss of holiness in which the Three Persons of the Eternal Trinity dwell. He, then, is the subject of this day's celebration,—the God of love, of holiness, of blessedness; in whose presence is fulness of joy and

pleasures for evermore; who is what He ever was, and has brought us sinners to that which He ever was. He did not bring into being peace and love as part of His creation, but He was Himself peace and love from eternity, and He blesses us by making us partakers of Himself, through the Son, by the Spirit, and He so works in His temporal dispensations that He may bring us to that which is eternal.

And hence, in Scripture, the promises of eternity and security go together; for where time is not, there vicissitude also is away. "The Eternal God is thy refuge," says Moses, before his death, "and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them; Israel then shall dwell in safety alone." And again, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." And again, "Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. . . . I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. . . . . I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near." And, in like manner, our Lord and Saviour is prophesied of as being "the *Everlasting* Father, the Prince of *peace*." And again, speaking more especially of what He has done for us, "The work of righteousness shall be *peace;* and the effect of righteousness, quietness and *assurance for ever*[1]."

[1] Deut. xxxiii. 27, 28. Isa. xxvi. 3, 4; lvii. 15. 19; ix. 6; xxxii. 17.

As then we have for many weeks commemorated the economy by which righteousness was restored to us, which took place in time, so from this day forth do we bring before our minds the infinite perfections of Almighty God, and our hope hereafter of seeing and enjoying them. Hitherto we have celebrated His great works; henceforth we magnify Himself. Now, for twenty-five weeks we represent in figure what is to be hereafter. We enter into our rest, by entering in with Him who, having wrought and suffered, has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. For half a year we stand still, as if occupied solely in adoring Him, and, with the Seraphim in the text, crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy," continually. All God's providences, all God's dealings with us, all His judgments, mercies, warnings, deliverances, tend to peace and repose as their ultimate issue. All our troubles and pleasures here, all our anxieties, fears, doubts, difficulties, hopes, encouragements, afflictions, losses, attainments, tend this one way. After Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, comes Trinity Sunday, and the weeks that follow; and in like manner, after our soul's anxious travail; after the birth of the Spirit; after trial and temptation; after sorrow and pain; after daily dyings to the world; after daily risings unto holiness; at length comes that "rest which remaineth unto the people of God." After the fever of life; after wearinesses and sicknesses; fightings and despondings; languor and fretfulness; struggling and failing, struggling and succeeding; after all the changes and chances of this troubled unhealthy state, at length comes death, at length the White Throne of God, at

length the Beatific Vision. After restlessness comes rest, peace, joy;—our eternal portion, if we be worthy; —the sight of the Blessed Three, the Holy One; the Three that bear witness in heaven; in light unapproachable; in glory without spot or blemish; in power without "variableness, or shadow of turning." The Father God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God; the Father Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord; the Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate; the Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; and such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost; and yet there are not three Gods, nor three Lords, nor three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated; but one God, one Lord, one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

Let us, then, use with thankfulness the subject of this day's Festival, and the Creed of St. Athanasius, as a means of peace, till it is given us, if we attain thereto, to see the face of God in heaven. What the Beatific Vision will then impart, the contemplation of revealed mysteries gives us as in a figure. The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity has been made the subject of especial contention among the professed followers of Christ. It has brought a sword upon earth, but it was intended to bring peace. And it does bring peace to those who humbly receive it in faith. Let us beg of God to bless it to us to its right uses, that it may not be an occasion of strife, but of worship; not of division, but of unity; not of jealousy, but of love. Let us devoutly approach

Him of whom it speaks, with the confession of our lips and of our hearts. Let us look forward to the time when this world will have passed away and all its delusions; and when we, when every one born of woman, must either be in heaven or in hell. Let us desire to hide ourselves under the shadow of His wings. Let us beg Him to give us an understanding heart, and that love of Him which is the instinct of the new creature, and the breath of spiritual life. Let us pray Him to give us the spirit of obedience, of true dutifulness; an honest spirit, earnestly set to do His will, with no secret ends, no selfish designs of our own, no preferences of the creature to the Creator, but open, clear, conscientious, and loyal. So will He vouchsafe, as time goes on, to take up His abode in us; the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, will dwell in us, and be in us, and Christ "will love us, and will manifest Himself to us," and "the Father will love us, and They will come unto us, and make Their abode with us." And when at length the inevitable hour comes, we shall be able meekly to surrender our souls, our sinful yet redeemed souls, in much weakness and trembling, with much self-reproach and deep confession, yet in firm faith, and in cheerful hope, and in calm love, to God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost; the Blessed Three, the Holy One; Three Persons, One God; our Creator, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier, our Judge.

END OF VOL. VI.

LONDON:
GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018